88a-1945

UP AND DOWN THE GRIBBLE GRAPH

An Interview With the Man Who Directed 'Anna Lucasta'

The New York Times
New York, New York
10-28-45

By THEODORE GOLDSMITH

"TIME cannot wither nor custom stale Her infinite variety." Shakespeare was apparently referring to the serpent of the Nile when he penned those familiar lines, but he might as easily have indited them to his first love, the theatre. As unpredictable as a snowstorm in July, it can make or break a reputation overnight. The average theatrical career has as many ups and downs—and as unexpected—as a Coney Island roller-coaster. And the average actor, author, playwright, director or producer may feel satisfied if once in a blue moon he has heard the celestial music of those extra curtain calls and gazed upon the fine flowering of commendatory prose with which the critics reward the anointed.

Take, for instance, the case of Harry Wagstaff Gribble—actor, author, director and producer—who has been riding the Broadway teeter-totter these past twenty-six years, scaling the heights some four or five times, and receiving as many sudden jolts on the subsequent descent. At the moment Mr. Gribble is again perched on the crest, with twin "Anna Lucasta" companies selling out regularly in Chicago and New York (the Broadway version plays its 500th performance Friday night), with no end in sight for either.

Not Always Thus

He it was who went up to Harlem to stage the original American Negro Theatre production of the Philip Yordan drama and to carry on with the assignment when John Wildberg brought the show down to Forty-seventh Street's Mansfield Theatre. And he it is who promises to bring a new version of "Romeo and Juliet" to Broadway next season, one based on the premise that the Capulets were of Moorish extraction, thereby injecting a note of racial antipathy into their feud with the Montagues. At such time as he undertakes that production Mr. Gribble hopes to enlist the services of Hilda Simms as Juliet, the same Hilda Simms whom he taught to invest the role of Anna Lucasta with a quiet dignity and sincerity rather uncommon in Anna's chosen profession.

Things were not always thus with Mr. Gribble. In 1927 he retired from the theatre—permanently, he thought—and from time to time he has renewed that resolve, generally after receiving a breastful of the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, more familiarly known as bad notices. "I got an inferiority complex on 'Perfumed Lady,'" he admitted of one such imbroglio, "but then the Guild gave me 'Taming of the Shrew' to do and I felt better."

Candid would be the word for Mr. Gribble's efforts at self-appraisal. He started as an actor in his native England, appearing in melodramas like "Harbor Lights," which gave him the opportunity to polish up his fustian talents with such lines as: "You shall be dragged before your judge, where you will be accused in the light of day of the midnight murder of your paramour." Shortly after coming to America he found himself writing and staging wartime shows for the Twenty-seventh Division, putting on "You Know Me Al" at the Lexington Opera House and "Let's Beat It" at the Century. On going overseas he toured the front with a soldier variety show, precursor of this war's "This Is the Army."

In 1921 he wrote "March Hares," a comedy still regarded as one of the bright conversation pieces in the American theatre. Unfortunately, "March Hares" did not enjoy too lengthy a Broadway run, a phenomenon common to many of Mr. Gribble's dramatic efforts. "I'm not an original dramatist," he admitted, without remorse. "I can rewrite if given a situation. 'March Hares' was just a freak." Original or no, Mr. Gribble has turned his hand to a surprising variety of theatrical efforts, including a whole series of "Artists and Models" revues which he wrote and staged. After these shows had run their course Mr. Gribble had the first in his series of acute depressions, from which he rebounded like a man on a pogo stick on learning that "March Hares" was a smash hit in London.

Adventure in Hoboken

Shortly thereafter he united with Christopher Morley and Cleon Throckmorton in a venture destined to bring fame, wealth and thirsty theatre lovers to the metropolis of Hoboken, N. J. They got hold of an old Boucicault drama called "After Dark," which Mr. Gribble staged for the edification of such playgoers as liked their melodrama straight, their heroines virtuous, their villains deep-dyed, and their beer alcoholic. "After Dark" ran practically forever in Hoboken to audiences composed chiefly of tourists from New York, who took care to include a sizable stopover at the Meyer's Hotel's Hofbrau in their itinerary. Morley, Gribble and Throckmorton attempted to follow it with "The Black Crook," but the Hoboken adventure had lost its pristine thrill for metropolitan playgoers, and presently the venturesome trio was obliged to board a Manhattan ferry, leaving only the foam-laden tables at Meyer's as testimonial to their efforts at civic betterment.

On Top Again 10-28-45

Further Gribble bullseyes, interspersed with the usual periods of idleness and inertia, were "Cynara," "Meet My Sister" and "No More Ladies," which he staged for the Shuberts, and "The Taming of the Shrew," which he did for the Theatre Guild. In 1940 he got hold of a play called "Johnny Belinda," avoided by other producers for the simple reason that its leading lady had nothing to say for almost the entirety of the show. "Johnny Belinda" ran through an entire season, with its mute heroine attracting playgoers as readily as any of the chattier charmers of the drama.

Following the success of "Johnny Belinda," Mr. Gribble's career hit another air pocket, from which he emerged only on receiving an invitation to journey up to 135th Street and help a Negro group with a new play they wanted him to stage. The play was, of course, "Anna Lucasta," and the rest is Variety history.

Jim-Crow Shoe On Other Foot, Now, Claims Nathan . .

Esquire Writer Says Whites Discriminated Against In Theatrical World; Sees Dark Future

Journal Guide Norfolk, Va. 11-24-45

EDITOR'S NOTE: This interesting and unusual article on the future of the theatre was written by Mr. Nathan for his regular column, "First Nights and Passing Judgments," which is a monthly feature of ESQUIRE Magazine. It appeared in the October issue of ESQUIRE. Inasmuch as it is novel treatment of the race issue and is one of the few articles we have seen in which whites complain of race discrimination, it is reproduced here for our readers by special permission of ESQUIRE.

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

(Reprinted by Permission of ESQUIRE)

ONE of the alarming aspects of our contemporary theatre is its race prejudice and racial discrimination. To observe the theatre of a democratic nation, whose chief element has always been that all men are born free and equal, discriminating against whites in favor of Negroes is a matter for some concern. The discrimination is increasingly unmistakable. It is also in a way understandable. But the prospect remains, if things continue at the present pace, that the day may come when one will have to go down to the Barter Theatre in Virginia to see a white actor on a stage.

The situation, to repeat, is nevertheless intelligible. The Negroes have proved themselves and have fully earned their estate. And the first peculiarly to agree are the very whites who are in danger of being ultimately ousted by them. It was these whites, for example, who on a committee composed of actors, producers and critics of their own race at the end of last season awarded the Derwent prize for the best performance of a supporting player not a white actor, but to the Negro, Frederick O'Neal. It was ten out of sixteen of these whites among the reviewers who again subsequently singled out from white actors for highest respect in that same category that same Negro actor, and who further in part endorsed Alice Childress, a Negro actress, above such white actresses as Catherine Proctor, Doro Merande and Catherine Willard; and Hilda Simms, the Negro actress, above such whites as Carol Stone, Mary Welch and others.

SEPIANS SCORE HITS WHERE WHITES FAIL

Paul Robeson in Othello drew crowds to theatres both in and all over the country for more than a solid year, a Lee in The Tempest helped to establish a New York for that play. The applause that greeted Bill Robinmphis Bound was immensely louder than that which her Victor Moore or William Gaxton in Hollywood And were the connoisseurs talking at the time of pretty white girls in the shows around town? Not greeted either Their enthusiasm in a pictorial direction was noticeably.

served for Sheila Guys, who appeared along with Robinson in the aforementioned Memphis Bound, and who is the comeliest colored girl seen hereabout since Wini Johnson floored the same connoisseurs a couple of years ago in the South Pacific.

Lena Horne, another beauty, was prayerfully but vainly sought by half a dozen producers last season and at length has been triumphantly captured by another for a show this season. Oscar Polk, whenever he appeared on the stage, has received notices, even in the minor roles he played, often far superior to those of the white actors in the same companies. The American Negro Theatre, situated up Harlem way, has proved to be the most interesting of all the experimental groups and the whites have had a hard time trying to attract equal notice to

their own similar enterprises.

ENTHUSIASM DENIED MAJORITY OF WHITE SHOWS

Porgy and Bess and Carmen Jones have been hailed with an enthusiasm denied the great majority of white shows; Ethel Waters in Mamba's Daughters was originally a sensation, and continues still to fetch in audiences on the Subway circuit; Ammons, Johnson and Catlett, the boogie-woogie pianists and luxe drummer, brought down the house at Billy Rose's Concert Varieties, as did Katherine Dunham and her colored dancing troupe, whereas Eddie Mayehoff, Zero Mostel, Imogene Coca and suchlike whites left it cold.

Dance teams like the Berry Brothers and singing teams like the Charioteers and the Inkspots occupy our stages, and to handclapping that can be heard down the block. Colored musicians purvey their swing and jazz to audiences who avidly eat them up. Anna Lucasta was one of last season's biggest successes. Fats Waller's music and the colored Jeni Le Gon put over Early to Bed the season before, The only characters in plays like Decision, Men to the Sea and No Way Out which Caucasian audiences have found to be in the least sympathetic have been the Negroes in them.

One of the most moving scenes in Sidney Kingsley's prize-winning The Patriots was that in which Thomas Jefferson's Negro servant figured. Another was that in Outrageous Fortune involving the white heroine's colored maid. And among the most prosperous comedy scenes in plays like Chicken Every Sunday, Dear Ruth, etc., are those involving colored actresses.

The outstanding item in Bloomer Girl, and by common consent the most successful, is the Negro singer Richard Huey. Avon Long, whatever show he appears in, seems to stimulate an audience no end. Ada Brown, Anne Brown, Etta Moten, Edith Wilson and various other such colored warblers regularly prove to be hits. The Delta Rhythm Boys are wows; plays about Negroes, like the Negro Richard Wright's Native Son, draw heavy trade; and the customers can't get enough of Josh White.

FUTURE NOT EASY TO FORETELL

White plays deal sympathetically with the Negro like, for example, Harriet, are warmly embraced by audiences and score long runs. "The Act—the Fugitive Slave Act—makes fugitives of American decency and honor! Think what it means, Harriet! Think what it does to the rights of the human being; not just to the slave, but to you, and me, and the man down the street! If I permit a freezing Negro to sleep in my barn—if I so much as give him a crust of bread, I am a criminal!" And the house cheers its head off.

Where it will all end is not easy to foretell. Ethel Barrymore, if she wishes to retain favor, will probably have to go back and revive herself in her old colored role in Scarlet Sister Mary. Lenore Ulric, after a stretch of failures, may again have to try to find herself in the chips by digging up her old Negress role in Lulu Belle. Walter Hampden, to preserve himself, may have to black up and team with Dooley Wilson, who always has good jobs and who goes over big. If they revive Uncle Tom's Cabin, Little Eva may perhaps more acceptably be played by Butterfly McQueen, who got such notices when she last appeared on the New York stage as have more usually been bestowed upon Lillian Russell and General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower. 11-24-45

The wave of the future seems already to have splashed up on the theatre's shore. Colored actresses like Carlotta Franzell, Muriel Smith, Elton Warren, Inez Matthews, Muriel Rahn and many others adorn the musical stage, as do all kinds of colored actors like Todd Duncan, Luther Saxon, Napoleon Reed, Glenn Bryant and Melvin Howard. The dramatic stage, which last season alone exhibited all of 24 plays and shows containing colored players, is embellished by Negroes like Georgia Burke, George Randel, Alvin Childress, John Tate, Earl Hyman, Viola Dean, Ruby Elzy, Georgette Harvey, Hilda Offley, Beulah E. Edmonds, George and Harry Ingram, Columbus Jackson and countless others. Colored playwrights like Abram Hill, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, et al., flavor the boards. Even the children's theatre finds itself most publicly acceptable when something like Horseplay is purveyed by an all-Negro cast.

NO PASSING PHENOMENON

The notion that this is all perhaps just a passing phenomenon and that it will not be long before things go back to normal doesn't hold gin. The portents have long been in the air, and the situation has long cast its shadows before. The success of the several Blackbirds shows, the great popularity of such comedians as the late Bert Williams and such singers as the late Florence Mills, the extended runs of Negro musical comedies like Cabin in the Sky, the warm welcome of actresses like Rose McClendon and actors like Richard B. Harrison, the Pulitzer prizes awarded to plays about Negroes like In Abraham Bosom and The Green Pastures, which latter is to be revived this season, and the interest developed in Negro subjects by white playwrights like Eugene O'Neill, Paul Green, John Wexley, Jim Tully, DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, Edward Sheldon, Laurence Stallings and William J. Rapp, among others, have amply hinted at what was coming.

And hinting even more significantly was the fact that numerous white comedians like Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor and Frank Tinney actually had to black up in order to gain the favor of their audiences. 11-24-45

TREND REFLECTED IN OTHER QUARTERS

The current stage in his general respect is simply a reflection of the tremendous popularity of Negroes in other quarters. The crowds that swarm into the concert halls to hear Marian Anderson and Roland Hayes, the radio audiences that cry for the humor of Rochester, the widespread reader interest in novels about the Negro like Strange Fruit and in Negro-written philosophical treatises like W. E. Burghardt Du Bois' Color and Democracy, the night club enthusiasm for entertainers like Hazel Scott and for bands like Cab Calloway's, the applause for the blues singers like Billie Holiday, the ring box-office lure of all sorts of colored prize-fighters, the critical acclaim for biographies like that of George Washington Carver—such things make it even easier to comprehend what has happened in the theatre. And yet easier still is the situation to be understood when we read the opinion of a Philadelphia music critic, duly recorded in the public prints, that "Caruso, Melba and Tetrazzini on a single bill could never have attracted so great a throng as jammed the Academy of Music last night for Dizzy Gillespie's concert."

In the theatre today the colored Hall Johnson choir gets all the applause that various white groups of singers fail to; some colored chorus girl like Joyce Beasley, for example, attracts all the admiring attention that a whole line of white cuties doesn't; the sight of a small colored child on a stage induces all the audience raptures that once were the portion of the white little Fauntleroys and Edithas; and Cosy Cole's drums once were the property of Eugene O'Neill's Emperor Jones.

And out of the theatre the whites are dancing the Negro's dances, playing his numbers game, shooting his favorite craps, eating his mammy's fried chicken dinners, and lying in the sun hopefully trying to look like him.

Maybe it's all for the best.

Play Means Well, Message Fails, Reviewer Says

The Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.
12-8-45

By BILLY ROWE, Theatrical Editor

NEW YORK—Lillian Smith's much discussed novel, "Strange Fruit," left the covers of its very controversial book and took on mortality at the Royale Theatre on Forty-fifth Street just west of Broadway last week. Presented in two acts and twelve scenes with mixed cast, the tragic tale of intolerance and miscegenation in America, talked much but said nothing. As mixed as the cast, the opening night audience shared a dual emotion. Many of the colored onlookers just got mad. To them, "Strange Fruit" was a play which did a good job of rubbing salt into an old but pregnant wound. To me it was some more old dirty laundry hung out to unfurl in the theatrical wind of Broadway.

Since it was staged by Jose Ferrer, no one can doubt the sincerity of purpose of Miss Smith's story of a white man who wrongs a colored girl and is later killed by a Southern brother gone Northern. What ever happened within the Royale last week was meant for good. 12-4-45

SAME OLD STORY

However, it's the same old story of a white producer and playwright trying to speak for the Negro when there is no way for him to know what the Negro really wants to say.

On the other hand, there have been too many "Strange Fruits" and all of them just show the race up as basically ignorant, weak targets for any NY shots the whites in America choose to fire their way. While it showed up the white man, it showed down the colored.

In a simple, straightforward manner, the drama captures the feeling of the two races, supposedly in the South, but which in reality is the same throughout America. In its various scenes it talked about the bigots which break down the friendliness of races and showed their shallow, twisted sides, but not once did it offer a solution. There were several wonderful opportunities, but only once did it allow a player to give out with a strong voice. This was done in the last scene by Juan Hernandez with great eloquence and superb acting. A veteran of many Broadway productions, Hernandez was easily the best performer of the lot. Having read the novel, I pictured a man like Melchor Ferrer as Tracy Deen, though Jane White fell short of my idea of Nonnie, the girl who fell for him and gave all in clandestine meetings. She always seemed above the role and therefore unconvincing. Earl Jones played his part superbly as did Ralph Theadore, the white man friendly to the Negro who ended the piece on a note of hope.

Notwithstanding, "Strange Fruit" like all the mixed and full cast plays of hte like, has typed the Negro on Broadway. They have failed to aid his cause in everyday life, and has, and will continue to break down his stature as an American throughout the world.

12-8-45

"STRANGE FRUIT"

DRAMA by Lillian and Esther Smith, based on Lillian Smith's novel. Produced by Jose Ferrer at the Royale Theatre, Nov. 29, 1945.

THE PRINCIPALS

Ed Anderson	George B. Oliver
Preacher Dunwoodie	Stephen Chase
Tom Harris	Ralph Theadore
Dee Cassidy	Ted Yaryan
Gabe	Alonzo Bosan
Doug	Jay Norris
Harriet Harris	Eugenia Rawls
Charlie Harris	Francis Letton
Tracy Deen	Melchor Ferrer
Alma Deen	Vera Allen
Sam Perry	Juano Hernandez
Laura Deen	Charlotte Keane
Tut Deen	Frank Tweddell
Nonnie Anderson	Jane White
Bess Anderson	Dorothy Carter

88a-1945

Anna Lucasta

Janice Kingslow, Chicago Beauty, Chosen 'Anna Lucasta' Understudy

Chicago, Illinois Defender

11-10-45

By MARJORIE PETERS

Chicago scores again! Plaudits are for Miss Janice Kingslow who has been chosen to understudy the title role in "Anna Lucasta," now playing to record audiences in the Civic theatre. Her contract has been signed with John Wildberg, producer, and she is being acclaimed by Harry Wagstaff Gribble, producer-director of the show, as star material.

That a third company of "Anna Lucasta" is being formed is well known in Loop theatrical circles, and that Miss Kingslow is being groomed for the stellar role is not denied by Mr. Gribble nor by Mr. Wildberg.

Miss Kingslow is 21 years old and without dramatic training or experience other than that received in connection with school and church groups within the community. She lives with her mother, Mrs. Virginia Warren Kingslow, at 5536 Indiana avenue. Mrs. Kingslow is a librarian at the Hall branch library.

Teaches at Betsy Ross

This is Miss Kingslow's first appearance in the Art Center's Artists and Models ball show. She has been practicing nightly there during the past few weeks under Miss Moten's direction with the 20 other girls chosen to be models. By days she was a student-teacher at the Betsy Ross school, not yet having completed work for her degree at Chicago Teachers' college.

Fred O'Neal, the male lead in "Anna Lucasta," had come down to the Art Center with Ralf Coleman, stage manager, and Mr. Gribble, to talk Negro theatre with Miss Moten and with Rex Goudaigh, director of the center, and the group was there while Roy Ragland and his Lens Camera club members were shooting pictures of the girls after rehearsals. Miss Kingslow showed up as highly photogenic.

Ensuing tryouts at the Civic theatre brought immediate excitement, and Mr. Gribble stated that he had found the talent he had been searching for throughout the country. 11-10-45

Miss Kingslow is already at work understudying Miss Hilda Simms, dynamic star of the Chicago show. Tall, with clearly-chiseled features and expressive hands, she carries herself with a natural poise that is a delight to those working with her. When interviewed today she stated that she intends to appear as planned in the Art Center's Artists and Models ball, where she will be Evanston Township High school, and was graduated at Hyde Park High school before attending Wilson Junior college and Chicago Teachers' college.

Has Been Amateur Actress

When asked about her dramatic experience today she stated that she remembered appearing in recitations at St. Andrew's Episcopal church when she was about five years old. Since that time she has participated there in many small dramatic productions. When she sang in a choral group from the Evanston high school she was chosen to play, and played for a time, small radio parts in an educational skit, impersonating Booker T. Washington and other notables in episodes of their childhood, but said, humorously, that she did not get paid for her appearances and soon stopped. 11-10-45

In high school she organized a puppet show with a group of eight girls who called themselves the Polka Dots and who put on modern versions of fairy tales in jive. This same group appeared several years in "jabberwock" held by Delta Sigma Theta sorority, and took first prize in the competitions in 1941. She is president of Beta chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. She has three brothers, one of them, Truxton Kingslow, in the armed forces playing with Horace Henderson's band.

Miss Kingslow is deadly serious about the theatre and stated today that she is particularly thrilled with her contract because of the high calibre of the direction and of the standards of Miss Simms and the rest of the cast of "Anna Lucasta."

"'Anna Lucasta' is not a colored play and not a white play, nor is it a play of Negro exploitation," she pointed out. "It is a human play, and they are playing it straight. This is the chance of a lifetime to show what Negro talent can do in the theatre. Every person in the cast believes in the American Negro theatre movement which developed this opportunity, and I feel that here in this responsible group I can develop and I can help in the development of all of us better than in any other location."

JANICE KINGSLOW and HILDA SIMMS

Valerie Black, Native Of Panama, Scores In "Anna Lucasta" Show

New York Age

N.Y. N.Y.

Valerie Black who is scoring as Anna in Company No. 2 of "Anna Lucasta" was born in Panama, but has become an American at heart in ways and actions, and is now among the theatrical greats here in America. 12-1-45

Valerie was educated in New York at Bryant High School and Hunter College. She was interested in science, but answered a call for dancers in the Don Grona "American Negro Ballet" and played the lead in their first ballet, "Children of the Earth." She danced in the Agnes Demille's "Obeah" at the Center Theatre during the first season of the American Ballet Company. She appeared with Bill Robinson in "The Hot Mikado" on Broadway and on the coast in "Born Happy"....and last year appeared in "Carmen Jones."

Her experience in the field of acting and dancing has been varied. She has also done radio and some club work. 12-1-45

She came into "Anna Lucasta" as understudy to Anna, and when Company No. 2 was formed, she stepped into the lead, and is being well received because of her superb acting, her charming personality, and her constant efforts in trying to do a better job every performance.

200th Performance

Philadelphia Tribune Pa.

2-17-45

HILDA SIMMS and EARLE HYMAN

On Tuesday evening, February 13th, the production of 'Anna Lucasta" played its 200th performance at New York's Mansfield Theatre.

2-17-45

Hilda Simms, who was completely unknown a year ago and had never appeared on the professional stage, has sky-rocketed to fame as the beautiful Anna. She has received unanimous acclaim from the press and has won numerous awards for her dramatic ability. Among these were an award from Mademoiselle magazine for being one of the ten outstanding women of the year and an achievement award given by the American Youth for Democracy for the outstanding performance of 1944. The latter was presented to her by Elizabeth Bergner who had won the award in 1943. The Philadelphia Record chose Miss Simms as the year's outstanding find in the theatre and one of the ten leading women of 1944. the New York Amsterdam News as the outstanding stage personality of 1944, The New York People's Voice as the most cited performer of 1944 and the Chicago Defender placed her on their honor roll for outstanding service in the cause of better race relations.

2-17-45

"Anna Lucasta," was first presented at the Library Theatre in Harlem by the American Negro Tneatre where it was seen by John Wildberg and immediately brought to Broadway. Practically the entire original cast was kept intact. It includes such professionals as Georgia Burke, Rosetta LeNoire, George Randol, Alvin Childress and Lionel Monagus and such newcomers as Frederick O'Neal, Earle Hyman, Theodora Smith, Alice Childress, John Tate, John Proctor and Duke Williams.

Canada Lee, now starring in "The Tempest" was a temporary member of the cast of "Anna Lucasta" for the first four months of its run. Due to his interest in seeing the play get oft to a good start Mr. Lee, then under commitment for the Shakespearean play, volunteered to appear in the role of Danny until called for rehearsals for "The Tempest." He has been ably succeeded by John Tate.

Anna Lucasta

BROADWAY WHO'S --- WHO

People's Voice

5-26-45

EARL HYMAN is the wholesome kid who does such a bang-up job as the lover of Hilda Simms in "Anna Lucasta." . . . Just 18, he was born in Rocky Mount, N. C., although his folks moved to Brooklyn when he was but six. . . . Went to elementary school in the boro of churches and graduated from Franklin Lane H.S. . . . Was quite a guy in his prep days too. . . . Among other honors won were "best actor," "best orator" and "best scholar." . . .Got the acting bug and joined the Negro Actors Guild so that he might try his hand before resuming his education in college. 5-26-45 Thanks the ANC for plugging so hard and getting him a number of radio shots with Norman Corwin and others. . . . Made his B'way debut in the ill-fated "Run Little Chillun." . . . His ambition is to do heavy drama (aren't they all like that?) . . . His observation on the theatre gives a perfect insight into this youngster's fine character. . . . To the query of what were his ambitions, he answered: "I'd like to stay in the theatre as long as the audiences want me."

O'Neal Cited for "Lucasta" Role

Afro-American

5-19-45

NEW YORK (CNS)—Frederick O'Neal, manager and assistant director of ANT, has been selected for the first Clarence Derwent Award of $500.00 for the best male performance for the season on Broadway.

O'Neal was the unanimous choice of the committee appointed to selected two of the season's best performers, one male and one female non-featured players.

Mr. O'Neal was named for his superberb, though unfeatured performance as the swaggering brother-in-law in the play, "Anna Lucasta", a Broadway hit. The award will be presented to Mr. O'Neal at the Actor's Equity meeting on June 1. 5-19-45

At this time Mr. O'Neal has taken a leave from the cast of "Anna Lucasta" in order to play the role of Christophe in the next production of ANT, "Henri Christophe," He will return to Broadway hit in July.

TO REACH MILESTONE

N.Y. Times

5-10-45

Hilda Simms, who has bee praised by the critics for her pe formance in the title role of "Anr Lucasta," the hit play with an al Negro cast which will be perform for the 300th time tonight.

"Anna Lucasta" in 200t Performance at Mansfiel

Afro-American 2-17-45

Md.

By STAFF CORRESPONDENT

NEW YORK — On Tuesday evening, February 13, the John Wildberg-Harry Wagstaff Gribble production of "Anna Lucasta" played its 200th performance at New York's Mansfield Theatre.

This is the same theatre that housed Marc Connelly's famous classic, "The Green Pastures," from February 26, 1930, to August 29, 1931, and no other show has equalled its run since that time.

Hilda Simms, who was completely unknown a year ago and had never appeared on the professional stage, has sky-rocketed to fame as the beautiful Anna. She has received unanimous acclaim from the press and has won numerous awards for her dramatic ability. 2-17-45

Won Numerous Awards

Among these were an award from Mademoiselle magazine for being one of the ten outstanding women of the year and an achievement award given by the American Youth for Democracy for the outstanding performance of 1944. The latter was presented to her by Elizabeth Bergner who had won the award in 1943.

The Philadelphia Record chose Miss Simms as the year's outstanding find in the theater and one of the ten leading women of 1944, the New York Amsterdam News as the outstanding stage personality of 1944, The New York People's Voice as the most cited performer of 1944 and the Chicago Defender placed her on their honor roll for outstanding service in the cause of better race relations.

"Anna Lucasta," written by Philip Yardan and directed by Harry Wagstaff Gribble, was first presented at the Library Theatre in Harlem by the American Negro where it was seen by John Wildberg and immediately brought to Broadway.

Cast Kept Intact

Practically, the entire original cast was kept intact. It includes such professionals as Georgia Burke, Rosetta LeNoire, George Randol, Alvin Childress and Lionel Monagus and such newcomers as Frederick O'Neal, Earle Hyman, Theodore Smith, Alice Childress, John Tate, John Proctor and Duke Williams. 2-17-45

Canada Lee, now starring in "The Tempest" was a temporary member of the cast of "Anna Lucasta" for the first four months of its run. Due to his interest in seeing the play get off to a good start Mr. Lee, then under commitment for the Shakespearean play, volunteered to appear in the role of Dany until called for rehearsals for "The Tempest."

SADIE BROWNE, who played Medea in the American Negro Theater production of *Garden of Time*, is now the Katie of *Anna Lucasta*, which reached its 350th performance Thursday night at the Mansfield.

HASTINGS, N. Y.
NEWS
Cir. W. 1,060
AUG 30 1945

Anna Lucastra Has Anniversary

When Broadway producer John Wildberg brought "Anna Lucasta," the Harry Wagstaff Gribble production of an all-Negro comedy, from the Y.M.C.A. Library in Harlem to the professional precincts of the Mansfield Theatre, he had no idea he'd ever get the chance to celebrate the first anniversary of the show as a big Broadway hit. But that's exactly what takes place on Thursday, August 30th, at the Mansfield and at Wildberg's penthouse party afterwards. And everybody connected with the phenomenal drama is happy about it. So happy, they're opening a second company of "Anna Lucasta" in Chicago a month later, and a third company for the road soon after that.

Written by screen dramatist Philip Yordan ("Dillinger," etc.), the play was originally built around the wayward daughter of a Polish family in a Pennsylvania mining town. Thus the odd name, "Anna Lucasta." But the characters that Mr. Yordan portrayed are, apparently,, so universal, that an all-Negro cast under the inspired direction of Harry Wagstaff Gribble has made the play rock and convulse audiences night after night. What started out as an experimenetal and semi-professional theatrical group under the aegis of the American Negro Theatre in Harlem has turned out to be one of the finest acting companies in America today.

Mother and Daughter

Karger-Pix

Georgia Burke (left) and Hilda Simms, who plays the title role in the all-Negro "Anna Lucasta" at the Mansfield.

"Anna Lucasta" Ends First Year On Broadway

Journal & Guide
Norfolk, Va.
9-8-45

NEW YORK, N. Y.—"Anna Lucasta" celebrated its first, and eminently successful, anniversary onstage Broadway on August 30, and confidently looks forward to celebrating its second anniversary a yeartrical history. It still is playing to hence. It may even go on to getfilled capacity houses. some new dramatic long-run records.

In June, 1944, the American Negro Theatre offered the play, originally titled "Anna Lukasca" and about a Polish family, in the hot basement auditorium of the 135th Street Library. Up to that time 4 producers had turned it down.

Critics who saw the Harlem production were lyrical in their praise and especially of beautiful Hilda Simms, a young Hampton Institute graduate without professional stage experience.

Then it opened on Broadway on August 30, 1944. The rest is theatrical history. It still is playing to

Earl Hyman, who plays the romantic lead and Hilda Simms who has the title role in "Anna Lucasta."

'Anna Lucasta,' Comedy Hit; Reaches 1st Birthday, Aug. 30

When Broadway producer John Wildberg brought **Anna Lucasta**, the Harry Wagstaff Gribble production of an all-Negro comedy, from the YMCA Library in Harlem to the professional precincts of the Mansfield Theatre, he had no idea he'd ever get the chance to celebrate the first anniversary of the show as a big Broadway hit. But that's exactly what takes place on Thursday, August 30th, at the Mansfield and at Wildberg's penthouse party afterwards. And everybody connected with the phenomenal drama is happy about it. So happy, they're opening a second company of **Anna Lucasta** in Chicago a month later, and a third company for the road soon after that.

Written by screen dramatist Philip Yordan ("Dillinger," etc.), the play was originally built around the wayward daughter of a Polish family in a Pennsylvania mining town. Thus the odd name, **Anna Lucasta**. But the characters that Mr. Yordan portrayed are, apparently, so universal, that an all-Negro cast under the inspired direction of Harry Wagstaff Gribble has made the play rock and convulse audiences night after night. What started out as an experimental semi-professional theatrical group under the aegis of the American Negro Theatre in Harlem has turned out to be one of the finest acting companies in America today.

Several of the cast of fourteen have won awards for their expert make-believe but practically everyone in the show was deserving. Frederick O'Neal, the brother-in-law, received the Clarence Derwent Prize of $500 for the "best male performance in a supporting role" for the season 1944-45, a similar award from the critics in the Variety Poll, and was runner-up for the theatre's own Donaldson Award. Hilda Simms topped Tallulah Bankhead in the Donaldson Awards, and Alice Childress won a Donaldson kudo for her fine supporting performance.

88a-1945 Anna Lucasta

"Anna Lucasta" Marks The 200th Performance At Mansfield Theatre

New York Age

N.Y., N.Y. 2-17-45

On Tuesday evening, February 13th, the John Wildberg-Harry Wagstaff Gribble production of "Anna Lucasta" played its 200th performance at New York's Mansfield Theatre. This is the same theatre that housed Marc Connelly's famous Negro classic "The Green Pastures" from February 26, 1930 to August 29, 1931, and no other show has equalled its run since that time. 2-17-45

When "Anna Lucasta" opened last August 30th, the management hung a picture of Richard B. Harrison, distinguished actor who played de Lawd in "The Green Pastures," in the lobby of the Mansfield for luck. It must have been effective for the comedy-drama has been playing to sold out houses ever since and it looks as though the present cast will be resident there even longer than that of "The Green Pastures." 2-17-45

Hilda Simms, who was completely unknown a year ago and had never appeared on the professional stage, has sky-rocketed to fame as the beautiful Anna. She has received unanimous acclaim from the press and has won numerous awards for her dramatic ability. Among these were an award from Mademoiselle magazine for being one of the ten outstanding women of the year and an achievement award given by the American Youth for Democracy for the outstanding performance of 1944. The latter was presented to her by Elizabeth Bergner who had won the award in 1943. The Philadelphia Record chose Miss Simms as the year's outstanding find in the theatre and one of the ten leading women of 1944, The People's Voice as the most cited performer of 1944 and the Chicago Defender placed her on the honor roll for outstanding service in the cause of better race relations.

"Anna Lucasta," written by Philip Yordan and directed by Harry Wagstaff Gribble, was first presented at the Library Theatre in Harlem by the American Negro Theatre where it was seen by John Wildberg and immediately brought to Broadway. Practically the entire original cast was kept intact. It includes such professionals as Georgia Burke, Rosetta LeNoire, George Randol, Alvin Childress and Lionel Monagus and such newcomers as Frederick O'Neal, Earle Hyman, Theodora Smith, Alice Childress, John Tate, John Proctor and Duke Williams. 2-17-45

Canada Lee, now starring in "The Tempest" was a temporary member of the cast of "Anna Lucasta" for the first four months of its run. Due to his interest in seeing the play get off to a good start Mr. Lee, then under commitment for the Shakespearean play, volunteered to appear in the role of Danny until called for rehearsals for "The Tempest." He has been ably succeeded by John Tate.

Numerous motion picture offers have come to the desk of producer John Wildberg for the sale of "Anna Lucasta" and negotiations are under way, but so far no final agreement has been reached.

AFRO-AMERICAN 1-6-45 Baltimore, Md. 88a

HILDA SIMMS skyrocketed to stardom in "Anna Lucasta," the best all-colored cast Broadway play of the year.

88a

MISS GEORGIA BURKE

N.Y. Am. 2-22-45

THEODORA SMITH plays Anna's sympathetic sister-in-law in *Anna Lucasta*, Philip Yordan's play which recently passed its 200th performance at the Mansfield.

Meet Georgia Burke, the Mother in "Anna Lucasta"

AFRO-AMERICAN Baltimore, Md. 1-6-45

NEW YORK.—Georgia Burke, star of stage and radio, believes colored artists will have their greatest opportunities for success in television broadcasting.

Having done several experimental television shows herself, the last one with Ethel Waters and Fredi Washington recently, Miss Burke speaks upon god authority.

"The reason for this is that colored people show up much better on the screen than whites, who look to chalky," she told the AFRO in an exclusive interview at the Mansfield Theatre, where she is currently playing the role of Theresa, mother of Anna in the play, "Anna Lucasta."

"On our last show," she said, 'studio officials told us that we all appeared so well. They played us a run-back of it and sure enough, we were wonderful!"

Miss Burke prefers the radio to stage work, although the theatre was her first love.

"That's why my ambition lies in radio," she continued. "The work is so much easier and much better paying. It's the highest paying profession as far as I know.

"Do you know that I get more money for a fifteen-minute radio broadcast than for one night's work in 'Anna Lucasta'?

"That's another reason why colored singers and actors should look forward to television. It will mean higher wages for less gruelling work."

She appears in two radio skits, "When a Girl Marries" and "Bright Horizons." This is her sixth year in the former show.

Some Job, She Says

"I have quite a job running from my matinees to radio broadcast," she laughingly said. "Most of the time, I don't have a chance to get my stage make-up off, and I just run out and grab a cab to the studio. I wear a white wig in 'Anna Lucasta' and I'm sure I'll forget to take it off one of these days."

Miss Burke was born in Atlanta, Ga., a daughter of the late Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Stokes Burke. She came to New York seventeen years ago, all of which have been spent on the stage, twelve of them on the radio.

Her first stage appearance was in 1928 when she was a member of the choir in "Blackbirds." In the play, "Decision," she received the Donaldson Award as the third best supporting actress of the 1943-44 season.

She alo appeared in "Mamba's Daughters" with Ethel Waters, in "Cabin in the Sky," "Five Star Final," and many others. On the radio, she has worked with Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, and Rudy Vallee.—DIER.

Hilda Simms, Star of "Anna Lucasta," Keeps Packing 'Em In.

The sensation of the present New York theatrical season is the stirring, thrill-packed drama, "Anna Lucasta," now appearing on Broadway with an all-Negro cast. And the sensation of "Anna Lucasta" is Hilda Simms.

Rave notices by dramatic critics greeted the Harlem production of "Anna Lucasta." So mighty in fact, was the chorus of acclaim that the play was soon moved to Broadway, where it is now playing to packed houses. The leading character, played by Miss Simms, is that of a harlot whose attempts to reform and rebuild her life are frustrated by a selfish, money-hungry family. Miss Simms' dynamic, intensely realistic portrayal of the part has won her a permanent place among the outstanding actresses of our era.

The story of Hilda Simms' rise to fame is one of lifelong ambition and hard work. Born in Minneapolis, she was the eldest of nine children. During grade school and high school, she acted in and helped to direct plays. At high school she appeared as Lady Macbeth, and in several modern dramas. After graduation, she did "Kiss the Boys Good-bye" with a semi-professional group, and later, "You Can't Take It With You." At the University of Minnesota, Miss Simms helped to pay her tuition by posing as a model for the art classes and working as assistant to the educational director. After receiving her B. A. degree, she went East, wrote stores for broadcast, and later joined the American Negro Art Theatre in New York. Miss Simms did not know it at the time, but fame was just around the corner. When players were cast for the Harlem performance of "Anna Lucasta," the casting director gave her the leading role without even hearing her read the part. The rest is history.

In addition to rare acting ability, Hilda Simms is endowed with natural beauty. Particularly attractive is her glamorous hair, which blends perfectly with her captivating personality. Miss Simms is one of the many well-known entertainers in the big "parade of stars" who highly recommend Snow White Hair Beautifier. "I heartily endorse Snow White Hair Beautifier to all my friends," says Miss Simms.

Snow White is the famous hair dressing widely used to give hair that "perfectly groomed" appearance.

Miss Simms, now 26, stands on the threshold of a brilliant stage career. Yet success hasn't turned her head. One of her pet ambitions is to study one day at the Moscow Art Theatre, to which end she is now learning Russian.

Hilda Simms Of Chicago Defender "Ann Lucasta" Is New Sensation

The sensation of the present New York theatrical season is the stirring, thrilled-packed drama, "Anna Lucasta," now appearing on Broadway with an all-Negro cast. And the sensation of "Anna Lucasta" is Hilda Simms.

HILDA SIMMS

Rave notices by dramatic critics greeted the Harlem production of "Anna Lucasta." So mighty, in fact, was the chorus of acclaim that the play was soon moved to Broadway, where it is now playing to packed houses. The leading character, played by Miss Simms, is that of a harlot whose attempts to reform and rebuild her life are frustrated by a selfish, money-hungry family. Miss Simms' dynamic, intensely realistic portrayal of the part has won her a permanent place among the outstanding actresses of our era.

The story of Hilda Simms' rise to fame is one of lifelong ambition and hard work. Born in Minneapolis, she was the eldest of nine children. During grade school and high school, she acted in and helped to direct plays. At high school she appeared as Lady Macbeth, and in several modern dramas. After graduation, she did "Kiss the Boys Good-bye" with a semi-professional group, and later, "You Can't Take It With You." At the University of Minnesota, Miss Simms helped to pay her tuition by posing as a model for the art classes and working as assistant to the educational director. After receiving her B.A. degree, she went East, wrote stories for broadcast, and later joined the American Negro Art theatre in New York. Miss Simms did not know it at the time, but fame was just around the corner. When players were cast for the Harlem performance of "Anna Lucasta," the casting director gave her the leading role without even hearing her read the part. The rest is history.

Hilda Simms Year's Outstanding Says Philadelphia Record

On Tuesday evening, February 13th, the John Wildberg-Harry Wagstaff Gribble production of "Anna Lucasta" played its 200th performance at New York's Mansfield Theatre. This is the same theatre that housed Marc Connelly's famous Negro classic "The Green Pastures" from February 26, 1930 to August 29th 1931 and no other show has equalled its run since that time.

When "Anna Lucasta" opened last August 30th, the management hung a picture of Richard B. Harrison, distinguished actor who played de Lawd in "Green Pasturs," in the lobby of the Mansfield for luck. It must have been effective for the comedy drama has been playing to sold out houses ever since and it looks as though the present cast will be resident there even longer than that of "The Green Pastures."

Hilda Simms, who was completely unknown a year ago and had never appeared on the professional stage, has sky-rocketed to fame as the beautfiul Anna. She has received unanimous acclaim from the press and has won numerous awards for her dramatic ablity. Among these were an award from Mademoiselle magazine for being one of the ten outstanding women of the year and an achievement award given by American Youth for Democracy for the outstanding performance of 1944. The latter was presented to her by Elizabeth Bergner who had won the award in 1943. The Philradelphia Record chose Miss Simms as the year's outstanding find in the theatre and one of the ten leading women of 1944, the New York Amsterdam News as the outstanding stage personality of 1944, The New York People's Voice as the most cited performer of 1944 and the Chicago Defender placed her on their honor roll for outstanding service in the cause of btter race relations.

"Anna Lucasta," written by Phillip Yordan and directed by Harry Wagstaff Gribble, was presented at the Library Theatre in Harlem by the American Negro Theatre where it was seen by John Wildberg and immediately brought to Broadway. Practically the entire original cast was kept intact. It includes such professionals as Georgia Burke, Rosetta LeNorie, George Randol, Alvin Childress and Lionel Monagus and such newcomers as Frederick O' Neal, Earle Hyman, Theodore Smith, Alice Childress, John Tate, John Proctor and Duke Williams.

Canada Lee, now starring in "The Tempest" was a temporary member of the cast of "Anna Lucasta" for the first four months of its run. Due to his interest in seeing the play get off to a good start Mr. Lee, then under commitment for the Shakespearean play, volunteered to appear n the role of Danny until called for rehearsals for "The Tempest." He has been ably succeeded by John Tate.

Numerous motion picture offers have come to the desk of producer John Wildberg for the sale of "Anna Lucasta" and negotiations are underway, but so far no final agreement has been reached.

88a-1945

Deep Are The Roots Spikes N. Y. Critics

New York Amsterdam News / N. Y. N. Y.

On the whole New York drama critics opened wide their mouths in praising DEEP ARE THE ROOTS as good theatre. But they bit the hell out of their tongues when they attempted to rationalize the fundamentals of race prejudice—which is the theme of the drama. Admitting that strictly in terms of dramaturgy, the writing misses being meritorious, the drama raters literally threw their fingeers out of gear in trying to defeat the honesty of the play's theme when in truth each time they attacked the play's craft, they offered counter arguments of their personal views which at the same time exposed their own well entrenched race prejudice.

Mr. Hill

10-20-46

The inarticulate reviewers among the critics said in effect that they did not like the play and let it go at that. Some of the more articulate ones, which includes those who have reputations for artistic standards as well as liberal points of view, stacked up piles of psychological, sociological and in some cases pathological statements which spelled out but one word. They disliked the idea of a white girl falling in love with a Negro soldier. Some were frank. Some went all around Robin Hood's barn. Others said so without quibbling. But it all amounts to the same thing.

Wedged down between what appears to be technical criticism, the boys etched in three basic evaluations against the play. First, they say the play double themed; secondly, it is contrived and thirdly, it has a false premice. In each instance, there is some minute justification for their reactions. But the way they treated the subject matter, they built up these faults by over-emphasis. Instead of precise criticisms, they dosed out their own short treatise on race relations, psychology and discourses on the rights and privileges of the Negro.

"DEEP ARE THE ROOTS is a bad play that is still worth seeing," stated Louis Kronenberger of PM. He continues that the play attempts to be both a social drama and a melodrama. Robert Garland of the Journal-Americn falls into the same school of thought said "two plays in the guise of one came schizophrenically last night into the Fulton Theatre . . . tells the stinging story of the admirable young Negro officer . . . and the clap trap story of the missing watch." Kentucky born Burton Rascoe of the World-Telegram stated that the theme was implausable for "no Southern Negro boy would or could come back from the war and allow the daughter of a senator fall in love with him—that is no sensible Southern boy."

10-20-46

This idea of hiding behind the play's central theme that it is melodrama because the senator uses the stolen watch as a theatrical trick is unsound criticism. Shakespeare uses the same trick in "Othello." Only the handkerchief of his wife is the device for culminating his play into a situation whereby the inner impulse of the character is exposed. Though Othello is not a social drama. Neither did the authors of DEEP ARE THE ROOTS label their play a social drama. They called it a play and left those who would to catalogue it. Is the situation true—To me, it is. The Southerner filibusts, camaflogues and feints behind the scene. Seldom does he come out into the open face to face a la yankee in his frankness.

Perhaps a sensible Negro, according to Rascoe, would not allow a blond to fall in love with him. But Brett in the play is fighting for the inherent dignity of man. This includes the four freedoms of which marriage and love is definitely a part of. Harry Taylor, former drama critic of New Masses, even regretted the fact that marriage between blacks and whites was drawn into the play. He feels that housing, education, jobs, civil liberties and a host of other rights must come first.

This thinking unconssciously denies the full freedom that Brett wanted. Is full freedom something to be nursed from a bottle allowing an ounce at a time? Anytime a man—that is a man in a subnormal existence shoots for full manhood with all the trimmings, he is bound to include the freedom to love. Therefore, Brett's actions are a normal development of a natural desire of man. The play is enhanced by its interracial theme.

As to the acceptance of the play's premise, the boys divide among themselves on the question of whether or not the situations are natural or artificial. John Chapman of the Daily News joins in the chorus and also adds that the play offers him nothing new in terms of solving the problem. The Daily Mirror comes in with a close second that the first act is good, but the remainder of the play peters out into nothing. Now the premise is established in the first act. Yet neither of these writers seem to get together . . . still against the same point.

When you deal in fundamentals, their is bound to be controversy.

This, we can expect. But when we toss in our limited observations of life as a balance to offset a play's true value, a boner is undeniably pulled. Frankly, I feel that some of these writers will return to see the play and write about it again. And one can expect some switching in thought.

Space will not permit to quote all the off the track remarks that have been written. But if and when critics stick strictly to form, structure and total dramatic values, they will find approximately three minor criticisms with the play. First, the senator is not consistently drawn. He switches from an apparent resigned bourbon to a violent and bitter man at which time the shading of his character in the beginning of the play does not foreshadow this transition.

Secondly, the cousing of the family appears to be a dye heart Southerner with an ounce of tolerance who in the end turns almost completely pro-Brett. In the end, the senator is allowed to return and make his bitter remarks about rousing the KKK when his former exit had already established this point—thus the return is anti-climatic.

Anyone missing DEEP ARE THE ROOTS regardless of their personal views are missing one of the treats of the season—if not of the century.

'Deep Are the Roots' Play About Negro In South Has Wallop

the Courier Journal

SO MUCH is happening in New York these days that one week end makes two columns. Visitors keep coming in and stirring up so many projects that I wish I were an amoeba so I could subdivide enough to keep up with everything.

The same week Ora Ferguson was here, Lt. (j.g.) Baird Barham came up from Washington to try to settle her postwar career. She didn't settle much, but we had a fine time.

Louisville, Ky

She took me to see "Deep Are the Roots," the play about the problem of a Negro veteran returning to his home in the South. It's a terrific play which doesn't solve much but certainly gives you plenty to think about. We thought it takes unfair advantage of the South and neither of us knows any Southerners like those in the play, but maybe they exist. At least some of the speeches rang familiar in our ears and the authors captured a lot of the thought cliches we've grown up with. The bad part is, we decided, people up here don't know enough about the South to discriminate. Anyway, the play has everybody talking and thinking about the problem. 11-11-45

A Day to Hunt Eats

The next day, which was a Sunday, we set out looking for a good place to eat. We ended up at the Penthouse Club which is on the 15th floor of one of the buildings along Central Park South. It was a beautiful day and the spot just suited our mood. There are windows along the entire wall facing the park and there's a big mirror along the other wall, so that everywhere you look you see beautiful scenes. There were plenty of people in the park that day, but it's so big that it's one of the few places in New York City where you can get away from people altogether if you want to. It's surprising how peaceful Manhattan can be when you're dining in a penthouse! It's expensive—our meal cost us $3.50 each—but it was worth it because once in a while you get mighty tired of hustle and bustle noise and crowds.

•

THE NEXT DAY, other Louisvillians called and invited me out to dinner. They were Edgar B. Hawes and his wife, Elizabeth. Ed's here in New York, working for Reynolds Metals and trying to solve the almost impossible problem of finding a place to live. The housing situation is so tight here that a big group of veterans had a mass meeting up at Hunter College last week to protest and elected a committee to call on Mayor La Guardia to demand emergency housing. Most of the time people can't even find hotel rooms, much less apartments. It's so bad I know a couple who've rented a cold-water flat for $21 a month. That means no heat or even hot water!

The Haweses and I had a good meal at Jensen's, which is right near Grand Central Station. It's a colorful, crowded place with ship models hanging from the ceiling over your head like the sword of Damocles. Elizabeth Hawes didn't think much of New York—the size of it rather overwhelmed her, she said. Besides, she had left their baby at home with her mother and she wanted to be in New York with Ed and at home with the baby at the same time. Nobody knows how long it will be before Ed can find a place so his family can be together again. Even Reynolds Metals can't help much. The company retains two rooms at the Roosevelt for employees who have to come here on business. At the moment, there are three men in each room!

•

NEW YORKERS still are talking about changing the name of Sixth Avenue to the Avenue of The Americas. While the debate was on, the press had a lot of fun with the issue. PM gathered all the comments together one day and reported that The Herald-Tribune, World-Telegram and Sun were against the change. The Sun said that, in line with projected change, Idlewild Airport should be called New Age of Transatlantic and Transcontinental Flight Airfield. Most individuals thought the change was silly and a stenographer I read about was quite alarmed. "Imagine," she was quoted as saying, "writing Avenue of the Americas as the return address on 100 letters a day!" The Mirror, on the other hand, approved. It said it wouldn't hurt real estate values one bit, but I've noticed just as many vacant lots as ever on Sixth Avenue and all the junky shops and hole-in-the-wall restaurants still are there, seemingly unaffected by the hoity-toity new name of their street. 11-11-45 All of the talk hasn't prevented the new street signs going up—but it's a big joke on the City Fathers who wanted to change the name. Avenue of The Americas looks fine on the signs along the Avenue. But on the cross-street signs, which always carry the street's name and the intersecting street's name in small print above, they've had to stick to Sixth Avenue. There just isn't room for 48th, 49th or whatever the street's name is and Avenue of The Americas, too!

•

LAST FRIDAY was a red-letter day. All summer long we've been watching developments of The Gloucester House, across from the office on 51st Street. It's our favorite fish restaurant and it has been closed for enlarging. Finally it's open again and we're all pleased as we can be—the place is twice as big now and yet the food and the service haven't chnaged a bit. You can still get the best scallops in town at Gloucester House—they're broiled and served swimming in melted butter, on piping hot plates. They make a wonderful mixed-green salad, too, and serve the lighest, best biscuits in all New York—and, unlike in most restaurants, they're served from the pan, right out of the oven.

Practically everybody there was on old customer and you could hear approving discussions going on at every table over the new decorations, new dessert serving table and other improvements. It was like old-home week—or inviting your friends in to dinner to see the new wallpaper in the dining room.

88a-1945 "Deep Are the Roots"

Should Plays Solve Every Social Problem?

The Worker **by Samuel Sillen** —

The three letters on **Deep Are The Roots** raise three separate questions about the play on which I shall comment briefly. The letter by T. J., in expressing disappointment at the absence of a "solution," reflects a widespread fallacy in literary criticism. It is simply untrue that Marxist criticism should demand of the playwright or novelist a definitive solution to the social problems he portrays.

Many a bungling error in left-wing criticism could be avoided if we recalled the advice given by Frederick Engels to the novelist Minna Kautsky. N.Y. N.Y.

"The author should not be expected to place in the lap of the reader the future historical solution of the social conflicts which he describes," wrote Engels. He declared that even the socialist novel with a purpose "fulfils its function completely if by its faithful representation of the actual relationships it shatters conventional illusions about them, if it destroys the optimism of the bourgeois world and if it renders doubtful the eternal validity of the status quo without offering a solution directly, and even, under certain conditions, without ostensibly taking sides." 10-14-45

Thus, Engels, a lifelong student of literary problems, and certainly a man interested in social solutions, took clear-cut issue with those who demanded a neatly packaged solution of every problem depicted by the artist.

INDICATES PATH

It is true, on the other hand, I would add, that to the degree that the author is realistic (gives a "faithful representation of the actual relationships") his work will contain the premises of a social solution. It will indicate the path along which a solution must develop. It will block up the avenues to false or illusory solutions.

Deep are the Roots does not attempt to "solve" the Negro question in the United States. Had it attempted to do so, it would have been a presumptuous failure. But it does show that the solution is not the benevolence of individuals, the self-conscious cultivation of "exceptional Negroes," intermarriage alone, generalized hatred against "all Negroes" or "all whites," keeping oneself in one's "place," moving from the South to the North.

It does, on the positive side, suggest through Lieut. Brett Charles, the initiative of the Negro people themselves, the maintenance and extension of gains made during the war, the discovery of alliance between Negroes and progressive whites, the strivings for full equality as human beings and citizens as against merely partial and piecemeal gains within the framework of inequality.

All these premises, both negative and positive, are not being read into the play. They emerge quite clearly, I believe, from the speech and action of the characters, from the dramatic situation itself.

The letter by Margie Morris expresses fear that not many in the audience will understand Brett's decision not to leave the South in order to marry Nevvy. I agree that Brett's last words to Nevvy could have defined his reasoning on this crucial point with greater clarity and precision.

The third writer, L. J. K., was moved by the play, but decided later that the play should not have neglected the plight of the mass of Negro workers. I indicated my own attitude toward this point of view last week, and I think it is now the turn of other readers to express themselves on this. Letters are still welcome.

Three Letters On 'Deep Are The Roots'

The Worker

Philadelphia, Pa.

Editor, Daily Worker:

I have nothing to add to Mr. Sillen's fine review, except that perhaps he added something to the play, something which was implied in the lines if you watched them closely, but not brought out satisfactorily in the action. Sillen says "And he (the Negro soldier, Brett) has to make the tragic choice not to marry Nevvy (the white girl) so that he can remain in the South and carry on his fight for a world in which black and white can live together." 10-14-45

If only the authors of "Deep Are the Roots" had expressed it as clearly and concisely! "So that he could remain in the South"—surely that was the crux of the matter, yet how many of the audience realized it? Not because the love and understanding that these two fine people had for each other would not stand up to the terrific social pressure they would face—but because they would have been able to live together only in some limited world of Northern intellectuals and not in the South in which both had been born and grown up, with whose future Brett was so deeply concerned that he had already rejected the chance of a distinguished career up North, to stay with it.

I hope the audiences who will see the play will see not two lovers forced by a cruel world to sacrifice each other, but rather a voluntary sacrifice for the sake of the struggle and leading to a possible triumph.

MARGIE MORRIS.

●

New York, N. Y.

Dear Sillen: The Worker

The trouble with **Deep Are the Roots** is that it poses a problem but does not offer a solution. How can you as a Marxist critic call a play like that a major contribution to the theater today, especially when it deals with such an important theme? N.Y. N.Y. 10-14-45 L.T.O.

rest of the trash seen on Broadway.

L.J.K.

●

New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Sillen: the Worker

Last week I was as enthusiastic about **Deep Are the Roots** as you were. On reflection, however, I realized that as Marxists we should have been more critical; that we should have observed the lack of comprehension of the basic economic factors producing hatred against Negroes. N.Y. N.Y.

Actually the play deals with the clash between an intelligent, educated Negro officer and members of the Southern bourgeoisie, the immediate cause of the conflict being the Negro's insistence upon enjoying the social standards of the whites about him. The plight of the mass of Negro workers is virtually neglected. 10-14-45

We should not be caught by the snare of a "liberal" drama and uncritically rave about it just because it is daring in comparison with the

"DEEP ARE THE ROOTS"

Sirs: Chgo. Sun. 11-5-45

. . . The publicity given the recent Broadway play, *Deep Are the Roots* (LIFE, Oct. 15), is most repugnant to every Southerner. *Deep Are the Roots* has two very patent untruths upon which its plot is based: 1) No self-respecting Southern girl of a good family as Genevra Langdon is supposed to come from would ever fall in love with a Negro even if he whipped the Germans and the Japs singlehanded, and 2) reactionary Senator Langdon, as you dub him, would have been joined by as many good Southerners as could have congregated around him to help ride the Negro Brett Charles out of town on a pole. . . .

W. DIXON DOSSETT

Beulah, Miss.

ROGERS SAYS:

'Deep Are the Roots' Finest and Boldest Race Relations Play

By J. A. ROGERS

(The views expressed in this column are those of the writer and do not necessarily express the editorial opinion of The Pittsburgh Courier.—The Editors.

The Pittsburgh Courier Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 10-13-45

IF one takes the critics too seriously he is likely either to pass up many good books and plays or to go in for much tripe. For instance, after reading the reviews on "Deep Are the Roots" (of color prejudice), I had the impression that it wasn't much above the level of the average Broadway play. All the reviews I read objected to the "theft" of the watch in it. One critic called it "clap-trap"; another a device to create action, and so on.

However, I personally found it nothing of the sort. The watch incident I found not only to be an organic part of the play, but it was most effective in showing the lengths to which some people in high life (not white Southerners alone, but humanity in general) will go, when crossed.

Mr. Rogers

* * *

THESE TWO Southerners, a retired Senator and his daughter, finding that the Negro lieutenant has made a will of his own, decide to "get him." The daughter had decided on the career that the Negro was to follow, and furthermore is angered when he refuses to get a letter of admission to the library from her. The father, from force of habit, wants to see the Negro "kept in his place" and not be wearing his officer's uniform about the house. Therefore, these small-minded society folks descend to the conduct of mean children in order to get even. I have seen or read so much of this sort of petty conduct among big folk, regardless of race, that having it in this play sounds natural to me.

The play, iteself, is, so far, the finest and boldest one of race relations I have seen. Unlike most of the other it is on a high constructive level. The Negroes are not criminals or neurotics nor are they played down anywhere. (I shall not attempt any review of it here. Schuyler gave an excellent and accurate appraisal of it in last week's Courier).

* * *

WHEN I SAY it is the "boldest," that is, where so-called miscegenation is concerned, I am not really saying much, however. The theatre, and even literature, in America is centuries behind life in telling what goes on in race mixture. I am not saying that, because in this play the white girl does not marry the Negro. That I thought logical because since the Negro lieutenant firmly decides to stay in the South in order to educate his people, he could not also marry the girl. I say it because American history shows that whites and blacks have been actually marrying (against popular opinion, of course) for the past 250 years. This was true of even most of the Southern States. In those days there was less color prejudice in the South because, you see, the white exploiter had the Negro where he wanted him and could afford to relax a little. Matters tightened greatly after the emancipation. 10-13-45

As for the North, there were always so-called mixed marriages. New York never had a law against it and Massachusetts and Pennsylvania repealed theirs 160 years ago. And as for what takes place now in real life, it's a joke. I have seen so many "mixed" couples in my time that "mixed" marriages seem ordinary to me. As for France, I saw several of these plays, films and dramas, especially one in which a Negro not only won the white girl, but gave his white rival a sound licking to boot. Americans know that the so-called races mix right along the line, but while life says one thing, the desire to preserve our caste system in order to exploit Negroes, says something else. Hypocrisy rules.

* * *

YET, "Deep Are the Roots" is a great advance. It plays fair with the Negro. There are parts in the first act where the drama drags a little but the acting of everyone throughout is so good that only an exacting critic would notice it. The cast received four curtain calls and the audience was willing to give more.

Especially good was the acting of Barbara Bel Geddes. It was so natural, so spontaneous, that at no time did I have the impression I was looking only at a play.

* * *

THE MOST ENCOURAGING thing I saw was the way in which the high-class white audience approved of it. A few walked out. They couldn't take it. But that was to be expected.

"Deep Are the Roots" has really started something. It has left the beaten track. I recommend it highly to everyone.

Readers Comment on 'Deep Are the Roots'

The Daily Worker New York, N.Y. 10-16-45

Editor, Daily Worker:

When the drama and literary reviewer of the Daily Worker joins the critics of the bourgeois press in the general enthusiastic acclaim of the play **Deep Are the Roots,** which is bourgeois in concepton from every angle and is therefore so utterly removed from the significant realities of the American capitalist Negro problem that the reviews from the New York Times to PM can with equal sincerity sing its praise, there is something seriously wrong with the theoretical Marxist equipment of the Daily Worker reviewer as applied to bourgeois drama.

It is the contention of this letter that the enthusiasm of the DW reviewer about **Deep Are the Roots** is the result of a non-Marxist approach to the function of the drama and literature as a weapon in the class struggle—date: 1945, place: United States of America. That the reviewer's approach is pragmatic—therefore petty bourgeois—and must be based on non-Marxist definition of the present stage of the class struggle in this country. Therefore, being a reflection in criticism of revisionist theory, it must be combatted.

Apart from the general ignorance and sterility of conceiving a play about the American capitalist Negro problem in terms of the relative luxury choices of Lieut. Brett Charles, there is still the crowning idiocy when the lieutenant who is naturally a very superior and intelligent type, decides to refuse a scholarship at the University of Chicago and "I'll pick cotton if I have to. My arms are strong. And I'll teach my people at night."

This is the same pattern from the Narodniki to Broadway, of "going to the people" which has often been a satisfying experience for some bourgeois but has never helped the people. The anti-intellectual overtone inherent in the decision of Lieut. Charles is again a petty bourgeois concept which divorces and prefers so-called "action" to intellectual participation in a struggle.

Unfortunately on this, today the major problem, of WHAT is to be taught and to WHOM, the authors have nothing to say and that is why this play is so utterly useless for our purposes, and therefore insignificant.

The position of telling the bourgeois audience in the year 1945 that there is a Negro problem and that whites are unjust to Negroes, is artistically insignificant, politically ignorant and useless. This is not the time to tell the people who are already involved in the struggle on our side, about the solutions. It is not the task of the writer or playwright to point out problems to the bourgeoisie, but rather to help fight for the solution of these problems. And it is up to a Marxist critic to aid in this task by being a Marxist.

L. B.
New York City.

* * *

Dear Mr. Sillen:

May that altogether exciting and important play **Deep Are the Roots** enjoy a long successful run. The authors and director know the issues and present them with the assurance of understanding.

Obviously Miss Alice ("benevolent liberal" as you aptly call her) is the key character. Whatever structural flaws the play may have show up in the final act where she and the young war hero must too quickly resolve the conflicts of their emotions, training and principles in the immediate struggles of the play, and join forces on the road to progress.

STIMULATING THEME

The most stimulating single effect of the play is Brett's consistent rejection of her patronage, the cumulative determination to carry out his own plans to live, work and teach in his native community, instead of accepting her ready-made solutions for his life and "individual security."

Alice most naturally assumes, in her own freedom to act as she pleases, that he will be overjoyed to fall into the scholarship she's arranged (with the aid of the GI Bill) at a Northern college where, under her sponsorship and with her "faith" in him, he'll emerge a great bio-chemist. Just as naturally she has difficulty understanding why he is now so stubborn as to refuse to come to her for a note to the librarian when he wants a book.

She is stunned that he could defy her stated opinion that she didn't think he should attend a Negro-White vet's conference in Atlanta by simply preparing to go anyhow.

But on all these things she finally comes around to some extent, "lets him have his way" as it were, defends him against the Senator's accusations. This is before she learns the horrible fact that her sister took a walk with him. Whereupon in growing alarm her liberal pretensions collapse upon the bosom of the reactionary old Senator, and she's papa's girl again.

So the "controversy of intermarriage" is raised and developed in the course of the play, causing some to consider it divisive and detracting from the merits of an "otherwise" satisfactory social drama.

However, as Mr. Taylor and as everyone who has ever lifted a finger in the struggle for equality knows, this question is always raised. To sidestep or ignore it is to leave the same deep prejudice lodged in our minds.

GREAT CONTRIBUTION

To treat the subject in its proper perspective, which this play succeeds excellently in doing (the characters exercise their right to choose), is a very great contribution to the understanding of those who have gotten into the way of thinking in terms of something less than equality for the Negro people for generations to come.

For the rest—bunches of fresh orchids to Earl Conrad of the **Defender** for his able criticism of Kronenberger's dreadful review of the play. Plainly the play pinches **PM's** liberal toes.

MARIE A. ROSENKRANTZ,
New York City.

* * *

Dear Mr. Sillen:

Re: **Deep Are the Roots,** my wife and I agree with you, not Taylor, but we are sick and tired of seeing this inter-racial question of love and marriage always portrayed as involving someone from the "upper" class.

Too bad someone can't write a novel or play portraying what happens when a Negro and white, both from the working class, fall in love and marry and have a family.

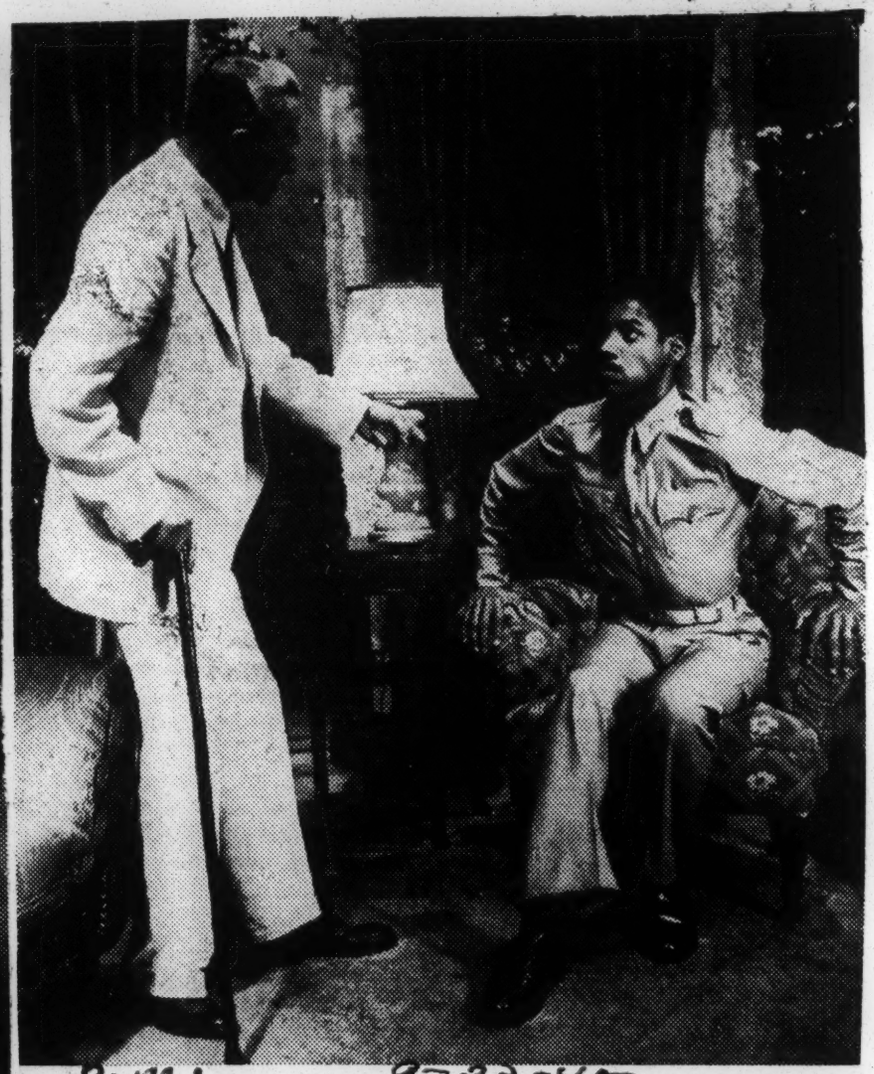
Furthermore, why do they always portray the relatives on the white side of the match as being the only ones who have feelings in the matter. Why not portray the feelings of the relatives on both sides?

F. I. INGRAM,
Cambridge, Mass.

THEATER

A Negro Soldier Comes Home to Bilboland

P.M. New York, New York 9-23-45



P.M. New York 9-23-45 New York

Deep Are the Roots, new play opening Wednesday at the Fulton, describes the attitudes and reactions of a town in the deep South to the return of Lt. Brett Charles, a Negro war hero (Gordon Heath). His mother (Evelyn Ellis), a servant in the house of elderly, hate-ridden Senator Langdon, reminisces happily over a rag doll Brett repaired for the Senator's daughter (Barbara Bel Geddes) when they were both children. The Senator (Charles Waldron) is apprehensive about Brett's homecoming, fears he may no longer know his place. "He has been over in Europe killing white people," he says, "with legal sanction he has been driving his bayonet through white flesh. Every day he has seen white bodies blown apart, white faces shattered. What has that done to his black soul?" When he finds Brett in his chair, he orders him out of it sharply.

P.M. 9-23-45

By SEYMOUR PECK

What lies ahead for the Negro soldier returning from the war?

This is the problem with which Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow confront American audiences in their new play, *Deep Are the Roots*, which opens Wednesday at the Fulton. 9-23-45

Is America interested in the question? D'Usseau and Gow, who gave Broadway one of its very few successful anti-Nazi plays, *Tomorrow the World*, are convinced that the war has made Americans—Northerners and Southerners—deeply sensitive to the problem, sincerely interested in seeing it resolved justly. P.M. New York

Supporting their contention is the unprecedented audience response the play has won these past two weeks during its tryout in staid, generally unruffled Philadelphia. And critics there hailed it unanimously as a drama that "poses a problem and proves A-1 entertainment, too." New York

D'Usseau and Gow, in the Army for the past 2½ years, began work on *Deep Are the Roots* 18 months ago. They used nights and Sundays off to write, do research and talk things over. People sometimes asked, "What's your play about, the Negro problem?" They would reply, "No, the white problem."

Deep Are the Roots opens with the return of a Negro war hero to a town in the Deep South. Offered the chance to pursue his education in a Northern university by his white benefactress, he refuses, choosing to remain at home to work for his people. He says:

"You know what my main job in the Army was? It was to make my men believe they were fighting for a better world for themselves—as well as for *you*, Miss Alice. A lot of them thought I was clean crazy. Some of them even hated me. They called me a white man's nigger, they called me a Communist, they called me everything. But they were all good fighters, and when it came right down to it, they all did what I told them because, no matter what they said, in their hearts they knew this was their big chance to prove themselves. . . . Yes, I could go North . . . but I wouldn't be happy. All through this war my people have been living on promises, they've had to fight on faith. Now the promises have to be made good."

The Senator's elder daughter (Carol Goodner) considers Brett, her protege, is proud of having paid for his education. Finding that Brett's ideas on his future way of life now conflict with hers, she is torn between her liberal sympathies and the deep-rooted prejudices her upbringing has given her. When Brett is arrested on a fake robbery charge, she listens in anguish to his appeal, "Miss Alice, do *you* think I stole a watch? Are you going to let them. . . ?" But does not interfere with the sheriff and his men.

9-22-45 P-M- New York City

New York 9-23-45

'Deep Are the Roots,' Play About Negro Soldier, Opens in Philadelphia Theater

The Call Kansas City Mo.
9-21-45

By HAROLD G. MILLER

PHILADELPHIA. — (ANP) — "Deep Are The Roots", a play about the return of a Negro soldier-hero to his old home in the deep South, opened in Philadelphia at the Locust theater Monday.

The play, admirably written by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow (authors of "Tomorrow The World") is blessed with a cast which gives a wonderful performance. Each character plays his or her appointed and important part in the composite picture.

Unlike many plays about the so-called "Negro problem," this drama has something to say and says it fearlessly, with compassion and indignation, tenderness and irony. The authors are talking about today and the deep South in this country, and the home-grown variety f fascism that grows here.

"Deep Are The Roots", is concerned with the problem created by the return of Negro veterans to their communities in the land of magnolias, honeysuckle, and lynching bees. It says, without hedging, that the problem is created by the white people who persist in treating the Negro as if they were his indulgent overseers.

Brett Charles, a handsome and intelligent young Negro, a lieutenant of infantry and a much-decorated war hero, returns from Europe to his mother, a trusted old family servant in the home of a proud and unreconstructed relic of the Confederacy, Sen. Ellsworth Langdon.

Brett, as a lad, has grown up in the Langdon household. The senator's youngest daughter, Geneva, had been his childhood playmate. Now, after four years in the army, he returns to find it is a crime for a Negro to be seen walking with a white woman.

It is the hope of Brett, a graduate of Fisk university, to be the principal of the Negro school of the small town, rather than go to the University of Chicago on a scholarship to work on a doctorate. He wants to aid his people and improve their situation.

Brett has been fighting for a better world. He has taken tea on a basis of equality with good English families and has drunk Chianti on convivial terms with Italian peasants. His faith in a better world is shattered, though, when the senator falsely accuses him of stealing a watch. He is arrested by a brutal sheriff's deputation, manhandled and, when cleared of the charges, ordered out of town. He leaves the train before it pulls out of the station and returns to his home from where he is determined to fight for the rights of his people as long as he can.

The part of Brett Charles is played by Gordon Heath who plays a difficult role with fine restraint. A native New Yorker, he has most recently been a staff announcer on WMCA and has served in a similar capacity on WLIB and WNYC. He has worked in little theaters since 1932, including the Richard B. Harrison players, Harlem Independent theater, Tose McClendon players, the American Negro theater and the Hampton Institute theater. At the latter, he appeared in "Pygmallion", "Eve of St. Mark" and "Hamlet."

Evelyn Ellis gives a splendid performance as Brett's mother, Bella. Miss Ellis was the original Bess in the Theater giuld's dramatic production of "Porgy." Born in Boston, she started acting at Harlem's famous Lafayette theater and in addition to "Porgy", has been seen on Broadway in Nan Bagby Stephen's "Roseanne," E. H. Culbertson's "Goat Alley," and the Orson Wells' production of "Native Son." Last season she played Virgie in "Decision" on the road.

Helen Martin, who portrays Honey Turner, a flighty young Negro girl, also is an alumna of the Rose McClendon players and the American Negro theater. Her first Broadway play was "Native Son," in which she played Canada Lee's sister both in New York and on the road. The road has also seen her in "Chicken Every Sunday", "There's A Family" and the "Skin of Our Teeth." Earlier this summer she appeared in "Mamba's Daughters" on the sub-

way circuit. Born in St. Louis and raised in Nashville, Miss Martin, at one time, led a 12-piece all-male orchestra.

'Deep Are the Roots' Provokes a Controversy

The Worker N.Y., N.Y.

The stimulating letter by Harry Taylor on this page is one of several I have received, commenting from different angles on my Daily Worker review of **Deep Are the Roots**, the new play by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow. This challenging play by the authors of **Tomorrow the World** has provoked more heated discussion than any drama in recent years. The reviewer for the **Daily News** literally complained that it almost made him think a forbidden practice in the theatre. But more serious playgoers greeted the appearance of a mature, sensitive work that raised and faced fundamental issues in American life.

And when you get down to fundamentals you are bound to get controversy. This is all to the good. I believe that a full discussion of "Deep Are the Roots" will help lift the level of thinking about the theater today and Negro-white relations. I hope that other readers will pitch into the discussion initiated by Harry Taylor, former drama critic of New Masses.

DEEPLY ROOTED PREJUDICE

Of Taylor's three points, the most serious is that which touches on the love relationship between the Negro lieutenant, Brett Charles, and the white girl, Nevvy Langdon.

Taylor cites the "confused and disturbed" reaction of a liberal physician in the audience. The physician was ready to give his assent to a play that limited its plea to the Negro's right to a job, a vote education, etc. 10-7-45

But his willingness to go along on these immediate issues was evidently impaired by the "injection" of the right of Negroes and whites to love and, if they so will, to marry as equal human beings.

Why was the physician disturbed? Because we prefer to avoid facing our own deeply rooted prejudices. We like to be stroked on our better side. Progressive white people long to believe that they have burned the poison of white chauvinism out of their system. It is not pleasant to face up to the contradictions in your own mind and personality.

But the great significance of this play is that it does strip away comforting illusions. In the end you do have to say, as the physician dimly realized, that to shrink from the genuine and sensitively portrayed love between Brett and Nevvy is to share to that extent the rotten, deformed attitudes of the Senator.

Said the physician: "I really don't know what to think now. I certainly don't want any part of the Senator's ideas; but then, neither would I like to see my daughter marry a Negro." 10-7-45

That contradiction presses home. Why not a Negro? Is this a reasoned conviction or a prejudice related to Nazi racism? The physician probably saw **Othello** and found it easier to swallow the Desdemona-Othello relationship; he did not identify himself with Brabantio, for this was Shakespeare in a century long past.

But to dramatize the integrity of the love between Nevvy and Brett is to shake many people to their roots, as the liberal Alice Langdon was shaken. It is to assert the need for a revolutionary shift in human attitudes if we are to understand in full the unnatural horror of Jimcrow values. They are so pervasive in our society that even the best intentioned people are very often their unconscious carriers.

MATURE TREATMENT

This theme was not "injected" into the play; it is organic to its analysis of social attitudes. I believe the writers have been both wise and courageous in refusing to evade it, and I think they have been mature in handling it.

Indeed this tradition-shattering drama represents an historic advance not only for the theatre but for American cultural expression as a whole.

Dramatically one of the most effective elements in the play is the unfolding of Nevvy's love. She herself has been unconscious of her love for Brett. It had never occurred to this relatively unpoisoned Southern girl that she could love a Negro; the full force of her feeling comes as a bewildering revelation to her. And she dares to name it.

As for Brett, only a hopelessly bigoted playgoer, who refuses to see what happens in the play, could arrive at the impression which Taylor seems to fear; namely, that he is a Negro yet "harboring designs on white womanhood."

For actually the authors are hitting hard at just this myth. It is Brett who makes the decision not to marry Nevvy. The Negro lieutenant, written and acted with great dignity, powerfully refutes the slanderers of his people.

While the play insists on the right to love and marry, it rejects, through Brett himself, the thesis that intermarriage is the solution to the Negro problem in America. It is Brett who decides that he cannot marry Nevvy if he is to carry on his work among his people in the Jimcrow South. 10-7-45

What this work consists in is elaborated in detail on the stage, to be sure: it is suggested in Brett's projected trip to a progressive conference in Atlanta, in his scheme for lifting the level of Negro education in the community. It is even hinted at in the Senator's worried reference to the Negro war workers.

If it be argued that these suggestions should have been made central to the action, then one is calling for a different play, a play which I hope will be written soon.

But I do hope that we are not going to fall into the old habit of criticizing playwrights and novelists for the plays and novels they didn't write instead of understanding what they did write.

I know that Harry Taylor agrees that we must avoid piling up a series of "must" social items that every work of art should contain, including the housing, job, wage, civil liberties, and foreign policy questions of the day.

On Taylor's first point, I don't quite understand his term "descriptive," which I hope he will amplify in a later letter.

On the third point, regarding the use of the watch as a prop in the action, I feel that Taylor exaggerates its "low level" but I do agree with his hint about the inadequately motivated and overhasty reconversion of Alice.

But Alice needs a separate discussion which I hope some readers will take up as a central problem in the play. 10-7-45

Let us not allow the Nevvy-Brett theme to distract our attention from the study of Alice's "benevolent liberalism" which is at the core of this rich and complex drama.

'DEEP ARE THE ROOTS'

New York Times N.Y.; N.Y.

A New Play Discusses the Question of the Negro and the South

10-7-45

By LEWIS NICHOLS

IN recent years the theatre has not been known for a lionlike quality of courage in backing its convictions. Dark enemies here and there have doubted the existence of convictions themselves, but the theatre in truth has them. What it has lacked too often has been the ability of expression and the determination to state its faith come hell, high water or Cain's warehouse. Being made up of people of good-will, the stage has been aware of injustice, prejudice, pressure, but it has failed to give the public credit for the same knowledge and belief. Too often the theatre has cursed fascism during the afternoon in its office, going on at night to tell the simplest love story which can be set to music. The theatre has argued that its audience prefers not to think too much, that it would rather leave the day's problems at home, or in the newspaper reporting them. But every now and again there comes a play which is willing to meet a problem half way, to settle down to an honest discussion. And victory sometimes bows to those who dare.

Ten days ago the Messrs. Bloomgarden and Heller brought "Deep Are the Roots" to the Fulton. Dealing with the Negro and the South, it obviously was the type of play to gray the hair of a booking agent. The question of race equality has been regarded as one of those to be discussed in the afternoon. Being democratic, the theatre's instincts were on the right side, but on its ledgers of profit and loss was a large question mark. "Deep Are the Roots" named names, referred to spades as spades and belonged in the category of plays which could cost producers their last shirts and final few friends. Granted that a man might offer a production saying anything he wished, could he at the same time locate anyone to listen? In their first joint venture the producers of "Deep Are the Roots" have found a large audience both here and earlier in Philadelphia. The theatre-going public obviously is willing to meet a discussion when one is advanced.

A Negro Soldier 10-7-45

The leading character of "Deep Are the Roots" is a young Negro who has been in the Army. An officer—"by an Act of Congress he becomes a gentleman"—he returns to the Southern mansion in which he grew up. The owner of the house is a former United States Senator, who has the ingrown certainty of distinction between white and black. Of his two daughters, the elder has taken an interest in the education and welfare of the young man, and the other having grown up with him, is his friend. The older sister hopes the Negro boy will go to a university; he, himself, wishes to teach school in his own small community. While this is being arranged, however, the Senator falsely accuses the boy of the theft of a watch, and he is taken off to jail. When he is released, and knowing he is in love with her, the younger sister asks the Negro to marry her and go North. He refuses on the ground that this would settle nothing and would help no one; he decides that his place is in the South.

Not All Is Strength

Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow —their last Broadway work was the anti-Nazi "Tomorrow the World"—have not set down the perfect play in "Deep Are the Roots." There are a great many things wrong with it. The theft of the watch is second rate melodrama, the whole marriage idea is unnecessary and some of the characters, notably that of the Senator, are forced into a mold more for the convenience of a playwright than by the development of personality. But even with its crudities and numerous moments that cry for change, "Deep Are the Roots" makes a good evening for the theatre. It is frank, it has something to say which should be said from the stage and in its basic belief it tries to be logical rather than violent. It offers no definite solution of a problem not only for the South but the North, but it does bring forth a legitimate topic. At the end of the first performance, the sidewalk before the Fulton was crowded by members of the first night audience, deep in discussion of both the play and the situation involved. That is all to the good. 10-7-45

"Deep Are the Roots" has been fortunate in the members of its acting company and in Elia Kazan, its director. In the first place there is Barbara Bel Geddes, who brings to the role of the younger daughter an honest and winning performance. She is always straightforward, never sentimental, and even when the Messrs. d'Usseau and Gow grow uneven, her portrait remains sincere. Gordon Heath is the young Negro, his first major role, and Charles Waldron is the Senator. Apparently to show the Northern viewpoint, the authors have introduced the character of a visiting novelist, a part that is wryly well played by Lloyd Gough. Finally, there is Carol Goodner, always a good actress who this time is appearing as the elder sister. From the playing it is obvious the players believe in "Deep Are the Roots," and they in turn are offering it their best.

Letter Disagrees on a Basic Theme

The Worker N.Y., N.Y.

Dear Sam Sillen: 10-7-45

In the main, I agree with your praise of **Deep Are the Roots.** If it were a poor play or its theme were insignificant, I should not consider it worth more extensive thought. But here's the category and quality of theatre we pray for: a first-rate theme, material of top social importance, absorbing characterization, movement eloquent and often exciting, beautifully performed, beautifully staged. Such a play demands and deserves penetrating analysis; and not only for its own sake, but in the larger and more general interest of such theatre.

So here's kicking off on a discussion which you and others may well enrich. "Deep Are the Roots" will remain a fine, courageous play; but the next play of its kind may be sharper. 10-7-45

THREE ASIDES

I have three asides to make on the d'Usseau-Gow play. First, that without having the justification of the treatment of **Tommorow the World,** it too is predominantly descriptive. We did not and do not yet know enough about the possibility of redeeming Nazified children: we do know a great deal about what can and should be done to give Negroes full citizenship.

Second, that the advocate of justice to our Negro minority, is, to put it politely, ill-advised to be the one to bring up that emotional old stinkeroo of Southern manufacture, "Do you want your sister to marry a Negro?"

A friend sitting beside me, a liberal New York physician, deeply stirred by the masterly first act, when asked for his reaction to the second act, said doubtfully, "I really don't know what to think now. I certainly don't want any part of the Senator's ideas: but then, neither would I like to see my daughter marry a Negro." The injection of this theme was for him a confusing, disturbing factor in a question that must first be answered on its most basic level of the franchise and equality of opportunity of education, integration and jobs before ever it can be approached as its rarer and most controversial shelf.

This is not to say that we cannot today have a play dealing with the problem of miscegenation; but to weld it frmly and for two acts with the far more socially fundamental argument for common justice to the Negro, is to seriously prejudice and impair that argument.

HARMFUL DRAMA 10-7-45

I am aware that the authors felt deeply that anything less than the fullest advocacy of human rights to our Negro brethren, would be cowardice. But aside from the injury it does to the more basic theme, this love theme finally traps the authors themselves into harmful drama.

When in the last act, the liberal daughter, Alice, confronts the Senator with proof of Brett's frame-up, and the Senator justifies it on the ground that "these black boys" returning from Europe have killed white men and probably slept with white women and mean to do so here, Alice replies, in effect, that this youngest daughter, Nevvy, has all along been in danger from Brett.

This scene coming toward the conclusion of the play when Alice has now become Brett's champion, is tantamount to the authors defiantly saying, "What of it?" But, of course, the truth is that neither Brett nor any Negro vet is harboring designs on white womanhood; all they desire is elementary dignity.

But the love theme betrays the authors into a more awkward and useless posture in the scene leading to the third act curtain. On the basis of his recent experience, Brett declares that he hates the entire white race and that he expects only injury from any of its members. He tells this to the one man in the play who has been wholly and consistently on his side.

Thereupon, the authors reconvert him by having Nevvy demonstrate the full and beautiful measure of her love for him. I submit that this kind of proof of the sincere co-interest of black and white is not generally available. It may become general, but only when all the preconditions of racial equality are long satisfied. 10-7-45

SENATOR'S WATCH

Now, let us see whether there is any relation between my first and second reservations. Yes; it is the love story more than any other factor that keeps the play almost entirely in descriptive ground. By selecting it from a welter of choices the authors blocked the play from moving forward into the positive fields of action where exists the real, living evidence of the possibility and the necessity of racial unity for the common good.

My third reservation is the least: the employment of the alleged theft of the Senator's watch to lock the conflicting forces. It is not good enough to argue that it could have happened that way.

I must again insist on the authors' power and range of selection. The watch frame-up is far below the level of the play; it is unworthy in imagination; it cheapens the latter half of the second act. Moreover, it, too, trips up the authors.

In the second act, Alice, knowing that Brett could not have stolen the watch, nevertheless has him arrested for its theft. In the third act, her fiance's proof that Brett did not steal the watch shocks her into proffering Brett her unreserved friendship. 10-7-45

These are my amendments to your fine review, Sam. Though particular to **Deep Are the Roots,** I think they indicate something of the delicate problem of selection which the writer of social drama faces. Like you, I greet all those involved in the making of this vital play and I hope everyone goes to see it.

HARRY TAYLOR.

THE PLAY

The New York Times 7/24/45

IN THE PLAY: *"All through this war people have been living on promises—they've had to fight on faith. Now the promises have to be made good."*—Gordon Heath (left) to Lloyd Gough and Carol Goodner. N.Y., N.Y.

DEEP ARE THE ROOTS, a play in three acts by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow. Staged by Elia Kazan; setting by Howard Bay; costumes by Emeline Roche; produced by Kermit Bloomgarden and George Heller. At the Fulton Theatre.

Honey Turner	Helen Martin
Bella Charles	Evelyn Ellis
Senator Ellsworth Langdon	Charles Waldron
Genevra Langdon	Barbara Bel Geddes
Alice Langdon	Carol Goodner
Roy Maxwell	Harold Vermilyea
Howard Merrick	Lloyd Gough
Brett Charles	Gordon Heath
Sheriff Serkin	Andrew Leigh
Chuck Warren	George Dice
Bob Izay	Douglas Rutherford

N.Y. Times 7/23/45

By LEWIS NICHOLS

After spending an early season fitfully dreaming, the theatre last evening decided to get in touch with the modern world again. "Deep Are the Roots" is the first work of the fall with an idea, the first not to shy away from a problem. Dealing with the Negro in the South, it has been written with deep sincerity by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow. Believing in it fully is an excellent cast, which plays with warmth and an equal sincerity. "Deep Are the Roots" is not only a plea for the understanding and final settlement through justice of one of America's problems, but it is, in narrower range, good theatre. It offers thought—and a show; it is well worth seeing.

N.Y., N.Y.

The story is of the present. A young Negro returns from the wars to the Southern mansion in which he grew up. He is an officer; he has been decorated, and in Europe he had run into friendliness, not prejudice. The owner of the mansion, a retired Senator, believes in keeping the Negro in his old place. One of his daughters has given lip service to equality, the other had grown up with the boy and likes him. The Negro becomes the head of a school, hoping to help in the education of his race, but before much can be done he is falsely accused of the theft of a watch and is thrown into jail. The younger daughter, his friend, knows he is in love with her and offers to marry him. He refuses, realizing that would be the solution of nothing, that they would be just "an island."

Not all of "Deep Are the Roots" is as good as its instinct; indeed, there are a great many flaws. In order to keep action going on the stage, the authors have contrived the business of the theft, which makes the play sag below its level of discussion. The matter of the love affair between the young daughter and the boy also is a theatrical trick; intermarriage is not the first step in racial equality, as the authors, themselves, concede at the conclusion. The character of the former senator is not rightly drawn; at the beginning he shows no signs of the completely warped and vicious man he becomes at the end.

The complaints probably are not of violent consequence, and about the acting there can be no complaint at all. Barbara Bel Geddes, as the younger daughter, is giving a performance which she will find difficulty beating later on. She has grace and tenderness and an honesty which breathes life into the part. Charles Waldron is the Senator and very good at it until towards the end the authors let him down. Carol Goodner is the older sister, offering forthright playing in a difficult role, and Gordon Heath is quiet and sincere as the young Negro boy. Elia Kazan has done an excellent job of direction, and Howard Bay's setting is out of the Senatorial South.

It is good to have the theatre back in New York again.

Hill Raves About "Deep Are The Roots"

PHILADELPHIA—DEEP ARE THE ROOTS will definitely find itself on the Pulitzer Prize list next spring as the 1945-46 theatre season draws to a close, and when the erudite critical judges select the best play of the year, don't be surprised to learn that this play wins the award which is the biggest acclaim man can bestow upon a contemporary drama.

DEEP ARE THE ROOTS is a daring, dignified and distinguished drama dealing with deep rooted prejudice in the deep south and proffers reasoning rather than rope as the eventual solution to the problem. It has stature. It has solid stage structure. It has overall universal significance. It is strictly high tension theatre that sets the most sluggish emotions marching. Having subjective emotionalism and objective intellectualism—the vital necessity for the good serious play—, the drama resolves itself into the most provocative piece of theatre on the stage since NATIVE SON.

Abe Hill

As a matter of fact it surpasses NATIVE SON. The latter was exciting, vigorous, absorbing and sensational, delivering a terrific wallop. DEEP ARE THE ROOTS is moving, restrained, thematically more important and palatable. It delivers a more dramatic impact because the actors, though involved in intensely dramatic situations, surpass the obvious physical turmoil and project from within an engulfing vitality that's impossible to resist. The play has the additional asset of stripping its character through the situations rather than have them shout the important issues down your throat.

Witnessing the fifth performance of the play at the Locust Street Theatre in Philadelphia last Friday night, it was well worth travelling a stormy night to see, and this reviewer is anxiously waiting the New York opening of the play at the Fulton Theatre on Sept. 26 to see it again—then maybe some more. Produced by Kermit Bloomgarden and George Heller and staged by Elia Kazan DEEP ARE THE ROOTS puts the stake of Negro-white relationship in a two hour capsule with every line and situation connoting some meaning to the life of every spectator.

Arnaud d' Usseau and James Gow wrote the script. To say the least, it is an excellent lesson in playwriting, honest, non-patronizing and courageous. This duet of dramatists don't traipse around apologizing or kissing anyone's foot—nor any other part of the anatomy. Though this is only their second Broadway play (they wrote TOMORROW THE WORLD), already they can take their place and stand shoulder to shoulder with the most popular contemporary playwrights. The writing job took a year and a half, and both writers being in the armed service, did the job between and after service duties. What they would have done with additional time to write is unpredictable.

Elia Kazan, as director, has turned in a crystal clear job of staging and succeeded in bringing out the ringing meaning of every word, period and comma. Rated as one of the very best directors in the theatre, Kazan, who has staged some of Broadway's best shows since his apprenticeship with the Group Theatre, lived up to his reputation. A good script, a good director and good actors are all on display in DEEP ARE THE ROOTS.

The play blatantly answers one of the most pressing questions facing the world today: What is the reaction of the returning Negro GI to his land of democracy? Lt. Charles Brett, a Fisk U. graduate with indications of being a scholar, returns to his home in the south after three years of service in the European theatre of war. Senator Ellsworth Langdon, a sophisticated carbon copy of Bilbo The Man, stacks up his mind with antipathy against the lieutenant no sooner than the lad arrives home. What will a Negro who has "been treated as an equal in England, been a hero to Italian peasants and slept with white women do back in the south?" This establishes the protagonist and the antagonist.

The senator eyes every thing Brett does with suspicion and reads into his actions such as wearing his uniform along the white supremacy, southern streets, going through the front door of the lily white library, and forgetting to say 'sir' as revolutionary. On the contrary, Brett is quite conservative with the additional attributes of being poised, cool and rational. "Even an act of Congress couldn't make you a gentleman," the senator tells Brett, which the latter hurdles very well. In between this cross current, Genevra, the youngest daughter of the senator, takes her pro-Negro stand while her older sister, Alice, softens the impact by her patronizing attitude.

Genevra and Brett are normal likable human beings, not special stage creations out to electrify the pros and cons of racial animosity. Secretly, they are in love—have been since childhood. But when this fact is exposed, the walls of Jericho come tumbling down. The sophisticated senator, hobbling on a cane near death's door, recaptures his innate venom, viciousness and violence. Alice reverts to the typical southern white woman instead of the patronizing liberal. Genevra and Brett face tragedy, while Bella, Brett's mother, denounces and departs from the household where she had served for 24 years.

Senator Langdon motivates the plot to jail Brett through Honey Turner, the maid, who aids him unaware for a while, but in the end does the right thing. The situation builds to an explosive climax wherein these characters clash and counter clash as it moves from violence to vision via false charges, trickery, jailing, remorse, exposure and understanding reaching the conclusion where Brett and Alice optimistically search one another's souls for a way to beat the cancer of prejudice—which indicates rationalization. Brett refuses to marry Genevra, but in so doing he strongly condemns the bigoted world that denies love between two people only 'guilt' is that they belong to different races.

'Deep Are the Roots': Superb Social Drama

The Daily Worker New York, New York

9-29-45

By SAMUEL SILLEN

A powerful and penetrating drama has at last arrived to breathe fresh life into an American theatre wilting for lack of courage and ideas. Deep Are The Roots rediscovers the resources of the theatre to illuminate, to challenge, to excite. Cutting deeply into the great cancer of American life, the social and psychological deformities of Negro-white relations in a Jimcrow society, the new play by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow achieves its effects with compelling purpose and craftsmanship. This beautifully staged and acted production is a bright event in the theatre of our day.

Deep Are the Roots is not a simple play, any more than the problem it projects is simple. Nor is it a propaganda play in the crude sloganistic sense. It studies human beings caught in the contradictions of a society rotted by discrimination within a democratic framework. With uncompromising honesty it dramatizes the crisis of characters faced with ultimate and inescapable choices between good and evil, between progress and reaction.

NEGRO GI RETURNS

The basic premise of the play, rooted in reality, is the leap forward in the consciousness of a Negro soldier returning to his Southern town with a Distinguished Service Cross. In the foxholes Lt. Brett Charles has had to live on promises and faith. Now he is determined to make those promises good.

This aspiration sharpens the conflicts inherent in Brett's background. Brett rejects and finally shakes the resigned philosophy of his mother, servant to the aristocratic Senator Langdon; he pierces the liberal facade of the Senator's daughter Alice, who had sponsored his education as an "exceptional" Negro; he must resolve the tragic conflict inherent in his love relation with Alice's young sister Genevra (Nevvy); and he collides head-on with the Senator, whose inner corruption and evil lead to a natural alliance between this "aristocrat" and the Ku Kluxers.

DEEP ARE THE ROOTS, a new play by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow, presented by Kermit Bloomgarden and George Heller at the Fulton, with Charles Waldron, Carol Goodner, Lloyd Gough, Barbara Bel Geddes, Gordon Heath, Harold Vermilyea, Evelyn Ellis and Helen Martin; staged by Elia Kazan; setting by Howard Bay.

TWISTED ROOTS

Deep are the twisted roots of the decaying South which the Senator represents. "Honor above all" has been the motto of his family for a hundred years, honor based on the horror of slavery and the monstrous lie of white supremacy. The reality is the warped, perverted system of white rule which in the person of Langdon will stop at nothing to crush the Negro. He moves on the stage as an evil force personifying the degeneration of a social class and tradition, trying to hold on by deceit and brutality directed against Brett.

Langdon's daughter Alice is a sharper challenge to a Northern audience, for she represents the dilemma of the liberal who believes she is advancing the cause of the Negro by personal philanthropy. The deep roots of prejudice are hidden until the crisis reveals that her good will is premised on Brett's "inferiority" as a Negro. When that premise is shattered, when Brett asserts his own will and when equality as human beings emerges as the real issue, Alice sides hysterically with her father. Only the crumbling of self-satisfying illusions, only the square facing of her own personal myths, opens the way for a genuine break with white chauvinism.

ANALYSIS OF LIBERALISM

In their portrait of Alice, the authors have given us an even more searching analysis of liberalism than in their portrait of Professor Frame in **Tomorrow the World.** Indeed, one quality that distinguishes the work of d'Usseau and Gow is their ability to focus the dilemma of liberalism and cut beneath its pretenses. Most other playwrights today are themselves the champions, and victims, of that verbal good will divorced from realism and practise which is so insidious in American bourgeois life.

The character of Nevvy, who was allowed to play with Brett as a child and who came to love him, is superbly realized on the stage. The poison never took with this girl. What she was taught by her elders never perverted what she felt as a human being. And there is a radiant sincerity, a freshness and health in her character, as played by Barbara Bel Geddes, that shatters all the myths of natural antipathy between the races. Her love for Brett is treated with great sensitivity and conviction, without vestige of sentimentality or melodrama. This in itself is a triumph for the American theatre, which has at last dared to give us a sort of modern Desdemona who sees her lover's visage in his mind.

Brett himself emerges as a figure of great dignity. It would have been easy to over-idealize him or to under-play him. But he is just right. He has made his decision to stay in the South, his homeland, to work with and for his people. "We must go slowly," says Alice. And Brett answers: "How slowly? If we stand still we're going backwards."

When he is unjustly accused of theft, beaten and jailed, he feels that the entire white world is an undifferentiated hostile mass to be hated and fought. He has to struggle against that undiscriminating bitterness which would destroy his own allies. And he has to make a tragic choice not to marry Nevvy so that he can remain in the South and carry on his fight for a world in which black and white can live together.

These are some of the elements in a magnificent drama whose richness can only be hinted at in this space. It is a drama which I feel does have certain shortcomings: the failure to focus Alice more clearly in the center of the action, and the inadequate preparation for her reversal at the end; the exaggerated emphasis on the aged and dying quality of the Senator so that the actual vigor of poll-tax reaction is blurred, the stature of the dramatic antagonist lessened; the ill-defined shift in cousin Roy, the candidate for Congress.

But these are footnotes on an incisively written, never flagging, hard-hitting play.

The entire cast, brilliantly directed by Elia Kazan, gave an inspired performance opening night. As Nevvy, Barbara Bel Geddes was radiant, vibrant, really memorable. Gordon Heath gave to the role of Brett firmness and dignity. Carol Goodner's Alice was excellent. To the part of the Senator, Charles Waldron imparted the necessary quality of twisted evil. As Brett's mother, Evelyn Ellis gave a vivid performance that communicated a rich character deserving of separate study by itself; Lloyd Gough as the northerner, Harold Vermilyea as Roy Maxwell, Helen Martin as Honey Turner are all fine.

Elia Kazan's superb staging has communicated the tensions of the script. Howard Bay's design of the Langdon living - room effectively conveys the fading splendor of the aristocratic tradition. 9-29-45

With its clear thinking, courage, and artistry, **Deep Are The Roots** measurably lifts the level of American social drama. A terrific indictment of the whole filthy structure of Negro oppression, it is more than a "protest" play. It is a moving play of human struggle and passion intertwined with social conflict. Don't miss it for the world.

1st Negro Drama Critic On Staff of America

Public Opinion - Kingston, Jamaica
8-13-45

Theophilus Lewis is the new drama critic for America, a national Catholic weekly edited by priests of the Society of Jesus. He backs up good taste with sound writing, which is precisely what the Rev. John La Farge S. J., editor-in-chief, had in mind when he hired him.

That Mr. Lewis is the first Negro Broadway critic for a major publication is of secondary concern to Father La Farge. He is the founder and chaplain of the Catholic Interracial Counsel, and his interest in color is only to promote an intelligent understanding between the two races .

Mr. Lewis is a postal clerk at the main post office, Eight Ave. and 33rd St. He goes on at mid night, which permits his attendance at openings. Mr. Lewis' qualifications for his drama post, his colleagues say, are two—his love of the theatre and a natural talent for expressive writing. 8-13-45

An Old Theatre Hand

Although never an actor, he is an old hand in the theatre. Soon after finishing his rather brief schooling in Baltimore, where he was born, he came up to New York and, at 19, went to see a new negro play, "Old Man's Gal," at the Lafayette Theater in Harlem.

He wrote a review on his own and later submitted it to the Messenger, a Negro paper. The editor praised him for it, and meant it—printed it and hired him to to cover all Harlem shows. He remembers that the late Richard B. Harrison was in the play. De Lawd was not so good, says Mr. Lewis. "But the part wasn't either."

"The paper only lasted three years after I joined the staff," says Mr. Lewis, "but I was lucky and got another job writing for the Interstate Tattler. I used to do some work for the Interracial Review, the monthly magazine issued by the Counsel

"Some time ago George K. Hunton, editor of the Review, introduced me to Father La Farge. He was kind enough to take an interest in my work, and I was lucky enough to have that interest develop into my present post as critic for America." He has been its drama critic six weeks.

Those Second Thoughts

Mr. Lewis is a broad, stubby man, shy, but with a cheerful round face that mirrors his friendliness. He says he likes to write, but finds it very hard "because you always think your best thoughts after you've turned in your copy and it is too late to make changes."

He says he hasn't noticed any discrimination in the theatre in the last 10 years.

"I have always been able to get the seats I could afford to pay for, and I have never had the slightest difficulty since I have been covering Broadway plays." 8-13-45

Mr. Lewis thinks that the development of the Negro actor in the Broadway theatre, and the talent of the Negro musician, has done a great deal to foster the racial understanding that is Father La Farge's goal.

"And I think Mayor James J. Walker helped a lot too," said Mr. Lewis. "He used to come up to Harlem often when he was Mayor, and after, and always with a fine party of friends. He was very kind to us, understanding. You know, when you get close to people it's hard not to like 'em."

Play Termed Anti-American Propaganda

Baltimore, Md.

By DON DE LEIGHBUR

NEW YORK—Suspicion is rife in Harlem theater circles that Jose Ferrer, Iago in Paul Robeson's portrayal of "Othello," has pulled a "way back play" in selecting Walter White's daughter, Jane, for the role of Nonnie in the play, "Strange Fruit," an adaptation from Lillian Smith's novel by that name. 9-22-45

Controversy has raged among thinking persons over the matter, many contending that "Strange Fruit" will duplicate its accomplishment on the stage as in the novel of putting educated colored womanhood in a bad light.

Selection of Jane White, daughter of the executive secretary of the NAACP, is thought to have been made to quiet criticism of the proposed play.

As they did in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the "Uncle Remus" tales, and more recently in "St. Louis Woman," those who see issues more clearly than those who look to temporary applause and a little gold along with it, have sharpened their pencils, their tongues, and their daggers to cry down "Strange Fruit" on the stage.

After Dark Romance

Since Ferrer, as producer-director, plans to stick close to the text of the novel in his dramatic version, theater-goers are in for a good dose of the love of a colored girl, graduate from college, and pretty, also, for a weak-willed, white youth, son of a leading small-town Georgia family.

This love affair is portrayed as typical, showing how white men carry on after-dark romances with colored women and then attempt to avoid consequences by marrying white women. Drama in "Strange Fruit" is heightened by a lynching of the wrong man who was accused of slaying Nonnie's lover. 9-22-45

The situation is this: The condition of the colored American today, socially, economically, and morally, is at such a low ebb that all thinking persons are devoting time and energy to help him climb to his proper place in American life.

Typing Colored Womanhood

Impressions are paramount in this effort and when the white majority sees colored performers on the screen, stage, or night-club, or hears them over the radio in loud and wrong characteristics, it does the cause of the race no good at all.

It has been found that white producers have suddenly done an about face in the type of colored woman they pick for theatrical or screen roles. The trend today is away from the Hattie McDaniel, Louise Beavers, Ma Rainey type, dark and buxum, to slim, trim, peach-hued beauties of the Lena Horne or Hilda Sims variety.

Where they employed the McDaniels, the Beavers, the Ma Raineys (she wasn't in pictures, but on the stage) to portray "mammy" roles or parts calling for blackness and a whole lot of white, shiny teeth, they have found a new use for the Lena Hornes, the Hilda Sims, the Edna Mae Harrises, and the Katherine Dunhams.

These advanced types of colored womanhood are almost exclusively portrayed as fallen women, concubines, "hot" lovers, glorified street-walkers, etc. This, then, is the idea one gets at the choice of pretty Jane White for the role of Nonnie!

It is out of the question, at least so far, for a colored woman with looks, education, and background like Hilda Simms, Katherine Dunham or Lena Horne to be seen in dignified, cultural roles that show colored womanhood at its highest level. No, the door is closed there.

To Glorify Lowness

The unspeakable lowness of Nonnie's relationship with the white youth in Lillian Smith's novel is now about to be glorified and made authoritative through the employment of the daughter of one of the leading men of the world engaged in the business of advancing his race!

To make it all the more emphatic and above-board, Ferrer has picked in Jane White, a graduate of exclusive Smith College in 1944, where she studied modern dancing and served as president of the student council. 9-22-45

This extraordinarily high background is now to be used in furthering the idea entertained by far too many whites that all colored women, whether they graduate from Vassar or are prodigies, can be typed as fitting prey for any white man's lusts and passions in clandestine relationships in lieu of normal companionships with men of her own race.

Should Study Implications

Mr. White would do well to study the implications of allowing his daughter to be used to further a conception of white supremacy that is built on the tearing down of the nobler attributes of colored womanhood.

To Debut in "Fruit"

JANE WHITE

Strange Fruit' Closing

12-30-45 N.Y.C.

Jose Ferrer announces that his production of Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit* will end its run at the Royale Theater next Saturday evening, Jan. 5. An extensive road tour will follow, for which booking arrangements are now being made.

Strange Fruit opened here on Nov. 29, after engagements in Montreal, Toronto, Boston and Philadelphia. 12-30-45

Also closing on Jan. 5 is *You Touched Me!*, the Tennessee Williams-Donald Windham comedy, which passes its 100th performance at the Booth this Saturday.

The New York Times N.Y.N.Y.
9-30-45

Speaking of the American Negro Theatre, Abram Hill, who plays an important role in the fortunes of that group, ought to be a man wreathed in smiles, exuding the air of well-being and content. The American Negro Theatre has grown out of its basement theatre in the 135th Street Library and now is residing in the Elks clubhouse on West 126th Street. Mr. Hill concedes they even have a deluxe red curtain. But, withal, Mr. Hill is unhappy. "We haven't been able to find the right kind of plays for the new season," he laments, adding, "Over the summer we read almost a hundred scripts and returned all but two. We have been able to develop actors, directors, designers and other craftsmen, but we can't seem to develop playwrights."

Mr. Hill, incidentally, says he and his colleagues are standing stanchly by their idea of pioneering and that even if they found another "Anna" they wouldn't do it lest they imitate themselves. What they would like to do, however, is a "really honest folk play about Negroes—not another 'Green Pastures,' nor a 'Porgy and Bess.'" They would like also to experiment with a musical dealing with everyday America, or perhaps, an American fantasy. Most of all they would like to continue to experiment with "socially significant new plays dealing with current American life, as lived by Americans, white or Negro."9-30-45

VARIETY
(New York City)
OCT 3 - 1945

Sees Negroes Solving Chi Legit Problem

Chicago, Oct. 2.

In view of the success enjoyed here by all-Negro plays and plays starring Negroes, the colored brethren ought to take over, according to Bob Casey, Chi Daily News drama critic.

Casey voiced the opinion in his review of "Anna Lucasta," which opened here last week. "Best plays Chicago has seen in the last six months have been Robeson's 'Othello,' 'Carmen Jones,' and this one. Perhaps the solution to Chicago's theatre problem is to turn the whole thing over to the Negroes. They seem to know what to do with it."

American Negro Theatre Plans 6th Season in Harlem

Daily Worker N.Y.N.Y.

Harlem's American Negro Theater (ANT) is growing up. To make room for its greatly expanded activities, it has taken a one-year lease on three floors of the big Elks Lodge Building, 15 West 126th St., New York. Its sixth consecutive Harlem season opens there next month.

The thousands of playgoers who saw **Anna Lucasta, Walk Hard**, and other ANT hits at their little Library Theatre on 135th St. will understand why moving to larger headquarters was necessary. The small auditorium there could barely seat 200 people. The crowds who were able to squeeze in practically burst the seams of the tiny basement theatre. In contrast, the new temporary playhouse of the ANT accommodates 500, with orchestra and balcony, and has a large, modern stage and spacious work and study rooms. 10-19-45

It's therefore good news that the ANT is able to offer another season of entertaining, significant plays—but this time in a comfortable theatre, and on a stage big enough to do their ambitious productions justice. The new season coming up promises to add to the continued growth of this famous theatre group.

Already the ANT executive board, actors, teachers, and students are busy day and night planning their sixth season. The first play to be presented will be announced shortly. The school for student actors (including several just returned from the armed forces), is now in session. Courses include dramatics, radio technique, body movement, speech. ANT actors are also busy preparing their Sunday afternoon radio programs over station WNEW.

In its five successful Harlem seasons, the American Negro Theatre has become a lively part of the nation's little theatre scene. It has helped establish actors like Hilda Simms, Frederick O'Neal, and Alice Childrens, and playwrights such as Owen Dodson, Theodore Browne, and its own director Abram Hill. It has become nationally famous as the first theatre to give Negroes a rightful, dignified opportunity to display their full creative talents.

10-19-45

Members of the ANT have not lost their original ambition to own a Harlem playhouse, entirely free of rent and mortgages. Its current subscription campaign was launched October 8th to enlist the financial support of thousands of subscribers. The annual subscription entitles the purchaser to become a sponsor of the theatre, and to have a reserved seat for every new play put on this season.

American Negro Theatre Leases Larger Building

Norfolk, Va. 10-27-45

NEW YORK —(ANP)— Harlem's American Negro theatre is growing up. To make room for its greatly expanded activities, it has taken a one-year lease on three floors of the big Elks Lodge building on West 126th St. Its sixth consecutive Harlem season opens there next month. 10-27-45

The thousands of playgoers who saw "Anna Lucasta," "Walk Hard," and other ANT hits at their little Library theatre on 135th St., will understand why moving to a larger place was necessary. The small auditorium there could barely seat 200 people. The crowds who were able to squeeze in practically burst the seams of the tiny basement theatre. In contrast, the new temporary playhouse of the ANT accommodates 500, with orchestra and balcony, and has a large, modern stage and spacious work and study rooms.

THEATRE GROUP IN SIXTH SEASON

The Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

NEW YORK—The American Negro Theatre opens its sixth Harlem season with its production of "Home Is the Hunter," by Samuel M. Koontz, on Dec. 20. Preview performances will be held Dec. 13, 14 and 15, and special benefit performances are being arranged. The play will be performed every Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8:45 P. M. This will mark the first production given at ANT's new playhouse, 15 W. 126th Street.

A drama dealing with the post-war upsets in a typical American industrial community, "Home Is the Hunter" is the first play written by Samuel M. Kootz, novelist, art dealer and critic. Four ANT actors are in the small cast. Abram Hill is directing and sets are designed by Irene Bresadola.

Three Colored Stars Keep "Bloomer Girl" Up 2 Years

Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

NEW YORK—(ANP)— Going into its second year, "Bloomer Girl," a musical comedy, has almost escaped notice of the colored press in spite of the significance of the play and three topnotch colored performers.

Tying in the emancipation of slaves with the emancipation of women, the authors have woven an interesting story set to catchy music, interspersed with modern ballet.

Dooley Wilson, who was skyrocketed to fame in the film "Casablanca" singing "As Time Goes By," has a more significant role in this play. He is a slave who has been "railroaded" to freedom and without the Uncle Tomisms usually found in such character delineations.

Brings Down House

His song, "The Eagle and Me," is symbolic: "We got to be free, the eagle and me." It brings down the house at each performance.

Richard Huey, well known Harlemite and Broadway character actor, was lifted bodily from his radio show, "The Lenox Avenue Song Man" and spotted nicely in the production as a co-runaway with Wilson and Hubert Dilworth, formerly of "Carmen Jones."

Four verses are sung the "Railroad Song," "The Woman Song," 'The Gambling Song"included, before Huey panics the house with 'I Got a Freedom Song!"

ridicule; conversion is smeared; salvation is mocked, and the church membership is made a joke."

Author Strikes Back

No protest had reached the mayor's office by Monday noon, a spokesman told the AFRO.

Miss Smith, author of the book from which the play is taken, and one of its producers, branded the minister's attack as "Nazi-like, anti-colored, anti-Hebrew, anti-Catholic and anti-everything."

"I have been working in race relations work for 12 years," she said, "and I have found that people who practice segregation always look around for some other reason for their feeling."

Dilworth's Voice Praised

In his own inimitable fashion, he sings these numbers solo and together with Wilson and Dilworth, who has one of the best voices in the entire cast.

Wilson's "Eagle and Me" is included in the finale by the whole company. At the conclusion of the performance, each of the colored actors takes a bow and is accorded tremendous applause for his efforts.

Minister Flays Play; Asks Mayor to Ban it

afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

By STAFF CORRESPONDENT

PHILADELPHIA — The Rev. Melvin M. Forney, white, pastor of the Third Baptist Church, Broad and Ritner Sts., and general secretary of Lord's Christian Alliance, Sunday, denounced the play "Strange Fruit" before his congregation. 11-24-45

The minister characterized the Lillian Smith vehicle as a "direct attack upon the Evangelical Christian Church," and declared that he would petition Mayor Bernard Samuel to ban the play from further showing here.

In addition the minister said: "The most important experience of our Christian life is held up to

Clarice Taylor of American Negro Theatre Has a "Deep-rooted" Understanding of Roles

New York Amsterdam News

"I was a sickly child, homely and sad," said Clarice Taylor the other day at the American Negro Theatre in Harlem, where she is rehearsing the only woman's role in the new play "Home is the Hunter." "I'm still definitely not the glamor type, but I ain't sickly and sad any more. I work like a horse doing things I want to do . . . And quote me as having said 'ain't'. I love the word." N.Y., N.Y.

Clarice Taylor speaks for herself. She is refreshing, she has no actressy mannerisms, and she is sharp-minded. Abram Hill, who is directing her in the play, which requires her to be onstage almost continuously, states, "She has a deep-rooted understanding of every role she plays, whether it's a bit or a lead part. She has a keen dramatic awareness that is pretty rare nowadays."

13 - 8 - 45

Frightened Little Thing

"I worked five years to get this role," says Clarice. "I started with ANT in 1940 as a frightened little thing with no experience to speak of. I studied acting and speech and dancing here. I watched every move that Abe Hill, Fred O'Neal, Hilda Simms and the other experts made. Once in a while they gave me a bit role, and I certainly did my best to make it a 'creation' even though I might have had one line to speak. I even became assistant manager of ANT to watch the mechanics of the place work. Oh, but I snooped around every place and learned millions of things to try to make myself an actress who knows her job."

"Home is the Hunter" requires only four actors, and each part is so demanding on the energy that a run-through of the play leaves them limp and exhausted. But Clarice, who is one of the sources of atomic energy, picks herself up after doing her highly emotional role of Ann Drake, the wife of a returned soldier whom she discovers she doesn't love, and goes downtown to her regular job as postal clerk at the 90 Church St. Post Office.

"I work there from 12 midnight to 8:30 in the morning," says Clarice, almost defiantly, puffing hard on a cigarette, "and if you think a skinny girl like me can't take a pace like that, you've got it wrong. During the war I acted with ANT and in Red Cross shows, and traveled four hours a day to my job at the Pickatinny Arsenal at Dover, Delaware. I did all my jobs OK, too. Remember, I'm healthy now.

Likes All Outdoor Sports

"You know why? Every spare minute I have I go in for outdoor sports: riding, skating, swimming — I like them all. I like everything that has lots of action. And naturally I love to dance. What girl doesn't?"

Clarice is a New York girl. When she was only four months old, she was brought here by her parents from Buckingham County, Va., where she was born Sept. 20, 1917. Her father was a postal clerk, just as Clarice is today. She attended the usual quota of public schools, when she was feeling well enough, including "nice old Wadleigh," and went from school directly into theatricals. She won a scholarship at the now extinct New Theatre School, where she studied Shakespeare, voice, music.

Since then she has been connected with several acting groups. She was with an amateur company at the "Y". Later she joined the Richard Huey Players (the same Huey who does the famous "I've Got a Song" in Broadway's "Bloomer Girl") and played in revue skits and even in a few television shows. When she got wind of the founding of the American Negro Theatre in 1940, she joined it promptly, and has been a familiar face there ever since.

All of the girls at ANT wanted to play Ann Drake, but the role, in line with ANT policy, was awarded Clarice as a member who has done consistently good work in small parts over the years, and had ac-

CLARICE TAYLOR

quired the basic training to tackle the big ones.

"Home is the Hunter" is a play of ideas, dealing with the jangled emotions of four intelligent people at conflict with one another and with the postwar world that had promised to be so good. It calls for deft, concentrated acting in scenes ranging from those of mild understatement all through to peaks of intense violence.

"Oh my, but it's a hard play to do," sighs Clarice. "but I'm glad ANT is producing it. "Deep are the Roots' on Broadway started saying some mighty important things that need to be said. And so does our play, but on a wider scale that goes beyond the race question and applies to all people. It's about the world we're going to live in now that the guns have stopped. What could be more important for people like you and me who love life and want it to be good?"

It was time for Clarice to go back to the play.

"If you want to say something really nice about me," she called back cheerfully, "say that I think it's wonderful to be an actress and a postal clerk at the same time. I can see the world from two sides of the fence. It keeps me from getting stodgy."

"Strange Fruit" Lacking as Drama, Reeks with Epithets

Afro-American

Veteran Actors Hold Play Up

Baltimore, Md.

By E. B. REA
AFRO Theatrical Editor

"STRANGE FRUIT," a play in a prologue, two acts of 14 scenes, and an epilogue, dramatized by Lillian Smith (with the assistance of Esther Smith), from her own novel of the same title, staged and produced by Jose Ferrer supervised by Arthur S. Friend, settings and lighting by George Jenkins, costumes by Patricia Montgomery, at the Forrest Theatre. The cast:

11-24-45

CAST

Ed Anderson	George B. Oliver
Preacher Dunwoodie	Stephen Chase
Tom Harris	Ralph Theodore
Dee Cassidy	Ralph Yaryan
Gabe	Alonzo Bosan
Harriett Harris	Eugenia Rawls
Tracy Deen	Melchor Ferrer
Crazy Carl	Robinson Stone
Charlie Harris	Francis Letton
Doug	Jay Norris
Alma Deen	Vera Allen
Sam Perry	Juan Hernandez
Laura Deen	Charlotte Keene
Tut Deen	Frank Twedell
Nonie Anderson	Jae White
Bess Anderson	Dorothy Carter
Henry McIntosh	Earl Jones
Jackie	Juan Hernandez Jr.
Salamander	Hanson Elkins
Chuck	Ralph Meeker
Miss Sadie	Mary Fletcher
Miss Belle	Esther Smith

Prologue: Peter Griffith, Richard Williams, Edna Thomas, Betty Lou Kern, Ken Renard.

PHILADELPHIA

Racial resentments, flaming passions, mob violence, religious hypocrisy, blind bigotry and prejudices of the South make up the ingredients fo dramatic dynamite in teh stage version of Lillian Smith's "Strange Fruit," currently showing at the Forrest Theatre.

All of these are brought out in the raw as the play reveals the inevitably tragic love affair between a beautiful, well-educated girl, Nonie Anderson, played by Jane White, and a young neurotic white veteran of World War I, Tracy Dean, played by Melchor Ferrer, with the background centered in Maxwell, a small Georgia town.

Neither the girl nor her paramour is strong enough to resist the tide of manifested tradition which rises to flood proportions, leaving none of the town's inhabitants completely untouched as the play subsides apparently to normal.

Precipitates Tragedy

There is a vast difference between the illicit love proclivities of a colored boy and a white girl in Broadway's "Deep Are the Roots" and "Strange Fruit." In the former it is denied consummation, in the latter it is indulged, with results tat it precipitate inevitable tragedy.

"Strange Fruit" can be a controversal play, but in its rawness it is an inescapable reality, considering whatever one's personal taste and preference may be. It's not sterotyped. It's purely a characterization of a blase social order.

11-24-45

There are moving moments in the play. But as a whole it is sprawling, cluttered and clumsy, even though Miss Smith diffuses her intimate understanding of personal knowledge in it.

Short on Dramtics

There is not much dramatic drive and strength. The play is kept from falling apart by its veteran actors, Juano Hernandez, who plays a convincing role as Dr. Sam Perry; Dorothy Carter as Bess Anderson, Nonie's sister; Edna Thomas as Mamie McIntosh, and Ralph Theodore as Tom Harris, the rich mill operator.

Tracy Deen, the white ex-soldier, returns to his native Maxwell, Georgia, to fish around to find what he can best do as a career while his family meddles in with what he should do to conform to the pattern of small town living. Tracy takes up again with Nonnie Anderson, his Negro sweetheart from childhood.

In the play Nonnie is soon found to be pregnant with Tracy's child. Under pressure of his parents and a white revival preacher, Tracy is brought around where he is willing to join church and marry a white girl whom he has grown up with.

Goes White Completely

He finally gets around to telling Nonnie that it is all over, that he is going to go white completely and Tracy then pays his Negro servant, Henry, also a childhood friend, to marry Nonnie so he (Tracy) can marry the white woman his mother picked for him.

12-29-45

Nonnie's brother, Ed Anderson, who has returned to Maxwell from Washington where he attended college, hears Henry bragging about what he is going to do, shoots and kills Tracy and then is aided in his escape by Sam Perry, the Negro doctor. Henry is lynched offstage as the slayer of his boss.

Jane White, daughter of the NAACP's Walter White, is presented as Nonnie but fails to be successful in the role, whether because of direction or script, it is not known, but what she did was decidedly unimpressive onstage.

Never Grows UP

Nonnie was supposed to be a highly educated Negro girl who lived in a dream world, remaining childlike in her love for the white man, Tracy Deen, and never seeming to grow up mentally. This was true of the novel, but on the stage it was not good theatre to allow a main character to be so pathetic with no evidence of strength of character of any sort apparent.

Unconvincingly passive, Nonnie spoke Miss Smith's lustreless lines as weakly as the lines themselves.

The few dramatic highlights of the play are provided by Sam Perry, played by the celebrated radio actor, Juan Hernandez; Edna Thomas, mother of the child, Henry, played by Earl Jones with convincing comedy relief and a good sense of direction while before the lights. Sam Perry, whose position throughout the first part of the play was based on strategic humility, soars to dramatic heights in his verbal clash with Mr. Harris, mill-owner, who was trying to be a friend of the Negroes of Maxwell as best he knew how. This was Ralph Theadore, a white actor.

12-24-45

Melchor Ferrer, as Tracy Deen, tried too hard to play the part sympathetically, although at times he convincingly registered the inner conflict of the character. All told, "Strange Fruit" proves to be "Strange Fruit," indeed, on the stage of the Royale Theatre.

"Strange Fruit" Throws No New Light on Race Problem

New York Amsterdam News

By DON DELEIGHBUR

Lillian Smith's "Strange Fruit" finally reached New York, but the consensus of the critics was that while the drama of miscegenation in the South has occasional merit, it fails to throw any new light on the vexing and perplexing problem of how to solve America's Negro vs. White Folk dilemma. In fact, to this reviewer, at least, the plya, "Strange Fruit", muddles the situation additionally.

N. Y. N.

The story that made "Strange Fruit" a best seller as a novel is presented on the stage of the Royal Theatre in 12 loosely integrated scenes under the distinguished direction of Jose Ferrer, who is to be remembered for his playing opposite Paul Robeson in "Othello".

The Way Whites Think

Miss Smith and her sister have contrived a vehicle that serves most to explain and portray the thinking of whites of the deep South toward the Negroes around them and the theatre-goer is still confused when he leaves the theatre because "Strange Fruit" solves nothing, offers no hope of greater understanding and no changes in basic racial attitudes that would warrant wide acclaim of the play.

The story is familiar by now.

Lillian Smith's 'Strange Fruit' Proves Disappointing as Play

Daily Worker N.Y., N.Y.

By SAMUEL SILLEN 12-5-45

Lillian Smith's **Strange Fruit** is a disappointingly poor play. In translating her novel to the stage, Miss Smith has heightened its shortcomings, blunted its insights. What remains is an exceedingly diffuse narrative that fails to illuminate the grave problem it sets out to describe.

The drama attempts to crowd the main themes of the novel into 12 loosely integrated scenes. The story, familiar to many readers, involves the cruelly twisted relationships between people under the southern 'white supremacy" pattern.

The white ex-soldier Tracy Deen deteriorates as he abandons Nonnie Anderson, the Negro woman he has loved since childhood and who is now bearing his child. Tracy pays his Negro servant Henry, also a childhood friend, to marry Nonnie while the white man decides to marry the woman his mother has selected for him. Tracy is shot by Nonnie's brother, whom Sam Perry the Negro doctor, helps escape back North. The conflict flares up into an off-stage lynching, with Henry as the quite innocent victim.

ABOUT THE NOVEL

The best quality of the novel was its psychologically incisive portrait of the white Deen family. In studying Mrs. Deen's oppressive authority over Tracy and his sister, Miss Smith effectively showed the neurotic collapse of a Georgia family torn between human desire and an inhuman tradition. Tracy's degeneration symbolized a society which uses the supremacy myth to twist and crush human beings, white as well as black.

But the Negroes of the novel were not as successfully done, especially Nonnie, who was portrayed as an educated girl whose entire life centered in Tracy. Nonnie lived in a dream world. She remained a child. And with unconvincing submissiveness, she continued to love Tracy even when his sheer bankruptcy as a human being would have exhausted the patience of an ordinary angel. 12-5-45

One difficulty here was that Miss Smith was using Nonnie as a prop for her exaggerated view that the adult is locked up in his childhood. It is one thing to stress the impact of childhood experience; it is another to freeze character at the childhood level. Nonnie becomes a pathetic rather than a tragic character. Miss Smith's psychology leaves little room for the positive impact of personality, its growth in terms of conflict with new situations.

ABOUT THE PLAY

The unconvincingly passive Nonnie on the stage is merely one element in a drama characterized by passivity, despite its overtones of violence. At the end of at least two scenes that I recall, the characters stare blankly into space as the curtain drops forlornly. Miss Smith's lines lack fire.

The static quality is related to a general attitude of helplessness which is not significantly modified by the shooting of Tracy by Nonnie's brother. I am not suggesting the need for a happy ending or of triumphant slogans. But if we are to have drama, we must have conflict. Here there is no plausible counterforce to social violence and decadence. Miss Smith has not found a convincing antagonist to the Jimcrow corruption that she sincerely abominates.

It is the mill-owner who tries to stop the lynching, and the mill workers who participate in it. And Sam Perry, the Negro doctor, while by far the best character of the play, shifts his position from strategic humility to revolt in an emotional outburst that carries few intimations of his new role.

Nor does the white family come through with the force of the novel. Tracy's deterioration is not realized as a dramatic process. There is not enough acid in the sketch.

To be sure, the flashback scene, in which Tracy recalls his childhood affection for Henry, is one of the better moments of the play. But on the other hand the Henry that we see as an adult is a figure at whom the audience is given far too much occasion to laugh. The grim irony of his situation is not conveyed.

Failing to focus on a central theme, **Strange Fruit** suffers very badly by contrast with **Deep Are the Roots.** Despite its good intentions, it illustrates once more the perils of converting even a good novel to the dramatic medium.

As director, Jose Ferrer has not succeeded in tying the many loose ends together. 12-5-45

As Tracy Deen, Melchor Ferrer has tried too hard to make the part sympathetic, though he at times ably registers the character's inner conflict; Jane White has given us an immobile Nonnie in an unrewarding role; Juano Hernandez gives us a believable Sam Perry; Earl Jones as Henry proves himself to be an excellent character actor to whose gestures and intonations the audience warmly responds.

STRANGE FRUIT. A play version of Lillian Smith's novel prepared by the author with the assistance of Esther Smith. Presented by Jose Ferrer at the Royale Theater. Staged by Mr. Ferrer. Settings by George Jenkins. Costumes by Patricia Montgomery. Production under the supervision of Arthur S. Friend. The cast includes Jane White, Earl Jones, Dorothy Carter, Juano Hernandez, Ralph Theadore, Stephen Chase, Melchor Ferrer and others.

JANE WHITE,
who plays the role of Nonie Anderson in the stage production of "Strange Fruit."

Dramatic Actress Heard in Outstanding Recital

The Afro American Baltimore, Md.

(Special to AFRO)

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Lou Swarz, dramatic actress of New York, scored a terrific success Monday night of last week at the First African Baptist Church in a recital sponsored by the First Congregational Church.

The baptistry of the church was arranged and lighted like a stage and provided an adequate setting for the "one-woman show." Miss Swarz was attractively and appropriately gowned in change of costume for each number, and speaking with a clear enunciation in her rich, vibrant voice she performed admirably. 12-8-45

The artist presented "Patterns" by Amy Lowell; "The Wooing" (Paul Lawrence Dunbar), an original monologue, and "The Tramp," an enactment of a Gypsy fortune teller before the climactic part of the program, "From African Waif to American Poet," portraying the life of Phyllis Wheatley, and a group of specialties.

LOU SWARZ

Among the latter, "Foolish Question" proved a great favorite with the audience, at the same time enlightening them to her great dramatic ability and fine voice, which makes her one of America's great actresses.

Jane Parker, pianist, played selections between numbers or during costume changes.

88a01945

Woman Smeared In Most Drama Roles

N.Y, N.Y Amsterdam News

By ABE HILL

"Won't you join me for a roll in the hay," says the passionate prostitute to the prosperous pimp as the two players enact the opening scene of a Negro drama. The above lines are purely imaginary and so is the situation. But if one looks back over the crop of successful plays dealing with Negro life, they will find that either these lines or the essence of this situation can be found in the bulk of such plays.

"There, but for the grace of God, go I," says the Negro spectator as he or she sits silently smoldering in his or her seat. Meanwhile, the white spectator more often says with a smile: "There go they without me and the grace of God." In these simple words lie a whole philosophy of life for Negro womanhood, according to makers of the drama and anyone else who has anything to do with milling out entertainment on the legitimate stage. 11-3-45

Mr. Hill

Pattern of Prostitution

With some candor and courage, the topic selected for discussion this week is the treatment of the Negro actress and the cut and dry pattern of prostitution the theatre has superimposed upon her. Advocates of this pattern include both white and Negroes, those who are in the theatre and those who attend it or love to talk about it. Their answer is that prostitutes and pimps are extremely interesting stage characters and as such belong in plays.

True, these characters who travel the primrose path do deeply move the majority of people in the theatre. But why must they be forever present in Negro plays—while only occasionally present in non-Negro plays. One doesn't need a microscope to find in plays about our folk, the loose woman, the out and out floozie, the wayward gal, the sporting woman, the raped virgin who is victimized by villains, both white and Negro. PORGY, the first serious drama of Negro life, dealth with the queen of Catfish Row whose love was basically sexual. In SCARLET SISTER MARY, the heroine literally gave children in each act and each one fathered by a different papa. Though Mamba in MAMBA'S DAUGHters was a tragic sacrificial mother, it was easy to read between the lines that her daughter by yirtue of her peola complexion was the offspring of Mamba and ??? In RUN LIL CHILLUN, the author offers not an ounce of explanation in defense of his loose leading lady. And by the grace of God (again), sexual immorality is most tenaciously adhered to in CARMEN JONES, ANNA LUCASTA and the much mellowed creature is some where around in DeLawd's GREEN PASTURES!

Motivated By Hate

Exciting plays have been built up around white actresses who are motivated by ambition, hate, love, sacrifice, careers, revenge, economic independence, women's rights, enlightment, ideals, complexes, neurosis, etc. Is one to believe that their dark sisters are non-existant. One has to if their judgemet is to rely upon what plays they have seen on the stage.

One cannot overestimate the importance of playwrights who record the conflict of individuals within themselves. The individual conflict serves as the focus of attention for the universal conflict and becomes the rallying point or the point of rooting interest. It is a must in good plays. The individual is likel yto encounter his most intensely personal conflicts in the search for sexual happiness. As far as contemporary dramatists are concerned, the Negro woman in pursuit of happiness is never a chaste person.

The easiest character in the world to create for the stage is the prostitute. Many times audiences have sat through an entire play and wondered what the leading lady was struggling for. But if a play opens with a street walker, no sooner than she struts across the stage for the first time, she is understood. Playwrights love to write them into plays. For Negro dramas, they don't care to write anything else but such creatures.

A character must always be balanced with a counter part to point up his conflict. Here, playwrights have also stuck to a cut and dry type in Negro dramas. The shady lady has as opposite a happier-than-thou neurotically religious sister who strolls through the town in her untouched white starched skirt. Sometimes she is pious and sincere. But most of the time she is a holy rolly shouting self righteous individual that hangs around on the borders of the ridiclous. 11-3-45

Since the beginning of monogamic marriage, social codes have demanded complete chastity on the part of all members of the female sex who expect to be admitted into sacred matrimony. The true scientific explanation of the superimposition of chasity on woman is that monogamic marriage was established to insure, as far as possible, the legitimacy of a man's heirs to his property. Thus monogamy had nothing to do with the higher erotic life, but was actually the first form of family in which woman was reduced to complete economic and sexual subjection.

All this is said in order to justify this writer's indictment of the loose woman theme in Negro plays. For in perpetuating this pattern, the theatre is robustly and frankly denying the existence of decent, honest and straight forward women who exist in any race. They are also overemphasizig a characteristic which isn't monopolized by any race or creed.

Let us not evict the sluts entirely, but let's balance the picture by giving color, verve and interest to other types of characters among sepia womanhood. Though ANNA LUCASTA is thematically about a prostitute, there are other characters in the play that give a cross section of women which to some extent makes it more palatable.

How about it writers, directors, producers, et. al.

N. Y. Students To See Play On Discrimination

Daily Worker N.Y. N.Y.

The students of Benjamin Franklin High School, at 116th Street and East River Drive, will see "Skin Deep," a one-act play, written by Charles Polacheck, on the subject of race discrimination, and produced by Stage for Action, at their Assembly on Friday, November 9, at 1:30 p. m.

The play is written in the style made famous by the Living Newspapers and in pungent dramatic terms destroys the bogus for race prejudice. 11-6-45

The Benjamin Franklin High School has requested its showing as part of its program to develop strong bonds of inter-racial friendship in the community where families of different races live.

"Skin Deep" was presented before its first high school audience at the James Madison High School, Brooklyn, on October 30. It is one of the most popular productions in the Stage for Action repertory, which includes a number of plays on vital contemporary issues. The organization operates on a volunteer non-profit basis. All of the actors, directors and playrights contribute their talents in the interests of a better educated and more articulate developing community action on social problems. Edward Chodorov, well known playwright, is chairman of Stage for Action.

Hilda Sims in 'Romeo And Juliet' Productio

The Call-Kansas City, Missouri

NEW YORK.—(ANP) — "Romeo and Juliet" may be produced next season with a mixed cast starring Hilda Simms, now featured in "Anna Lucasta" in charge. 11-9-45

That idea is credited to Harry Gribble, the man who is responsible for the success of "Anna Lucasta" and the discovery of Hilda Simms, and Frederick O'Neal, a representative of the American Negro theatre, while the pair were discussing Shakespearean themes several months ago.

They agreed that a mixed cast will dramatically present the fundamental cause of the feud between the renowned Montagues and Capulets as a quarrel based upon racial disparity. The Montagues, from whence came Romeo, will be presented as an Italian family while the Capulets, prefoniters of their doomed maid, as Moors.

Gribble revealed that Michael Myerberg will be associated in the production and confessed that Hilda Simms is his choice for the lead role. His job now is to find a suitable Romeo for his mixed cast.

Neither Gribble nor O'Neal has disclosed where the novel production will be staged.

Critics Lukewarm On "Strange Fruit"

Journal + Guide 12-9-45

Norfolk, Va.

Staff Correspondence

NEW YORK — "Strange Fruit," drama of violence and miscegenation, based on Lillian Smith's best selling novel, "Strange Fruit," opened at the Royale Theatre, Thursday, November 29. According to a consensus of local top-flight theater critics it came forth as a significant and well played, yet awkward and inexpert play, lacking in sustained force and continuity.

Despite bad reviews, contends Julius Colby, WMCA critic, the play will succeed, because "on Broadway 'Strange Fruit' will be synonymous with sex." He also states that the appearance of this play means that Broadway is 'growing up,' since it is the third such play to appear in the last 30 years.

GOOD ACTING

"It is a shame that with acting so good, sets so fine, author's characterizations so well established and purpose so high, the evening at 'Strange Fruit,' for the most part, should be such a listless bore," states Burton Rascoe of the World Telegram. 12-8-45

"Miss Smith," he continues, "has a fine earnestness and a clear head about the problem facing the whites and the Negroes in the South. But, alas, she has even less skill as a dramatist than she has as a novelist."

SENTENCE REVIEWS

"With best of intentions 'Strange Fruit' is a bore."—World-Telegram.

"Less power than purpose."—PM.

"'Strange Fruit' loses force in dramatization."—N. Y. Post.

"Abe Hill calls 'Strange Fruit' big disappointment." — Amsterdam News.

"It led to decidedly mixed reactions."—Daily Worker.

"Diffuse pungence."—N. Y. Herald-Tribune.

"'Strange Fruit' . . . is being read out loud to you. This shouldn't be."—N. Y. Journal-American.

"Offers good acting in an awkward and disjointed drama."—N. Y. Sun.

"It is a disagreeable truth, but Lillian Smith has not made a satisfactory play of 'Strange Fruit'."—N. Y. Times 12-8-45

JANE WHITE'S ROLE

The entire cast was credited with good acting. Earl Jones as the clumsy houseboy was tops, while special honors went to Jane (Nonnie) White, Juan (Dr. Perry) Hernandez, Melchor (Tracy) Ferrer, and to a few others.—V. W.

Calls 'Strange Fruit' 'Big Disappointment'

New York Amsterdam-News New York City
12-1-45

By ABE HILL

PHILADELPHIA—STRANGE FRUIT in printed words two seasons ago created a mild explosion in literary circles that bordered on the sensational. STRANGE FRUIT now on the stage with spoken words and with visual action as witnessed here at the Forrest Theatre is a sprawling piece of inept theatre that borders on the bore. Producer Jose Ferrer, dramatist Lilliam Smith and 34 well seasoned players have failed to lift the printed words of the book out of the binders of the book and set forth the turbulent emotional impact that the strict confines of the stage demand. Therefore, I regretfully report that the play is a colossal disappointment which only a miracle can make into a success.

Mr. Hill

The theme of the play, like the novel, deals with the suicidal effects of segregation. In other words, the race prejudice between Negro and whites nurtures and perpetuates cultural isolation which is detrimental to both races and to progress of civilization in general. Indeed the strange fruit that hangs from America's tree of hope for real democracy bears a bitter pill that gnaws away the better instincts of mankind. Miss Smith's theme is absolutely important and one in which no right thinking person can deny. For in unity there is strength, economically, politically and socially; while in disunity there is discord proportionately to the degree between the haves over the have nots.

Maxwell, Georgia is selected as the focal point of the play. Here, the town is used as a symbol of hundreds of nests of cultural isolation throughout America. Here the author chooses the pivotal characters of the drama—an educated Negro girl and a bewildered, discontent and prejudice hating Georgia white lad. Neither one can resist the greater bond of love that draws them together despite the mores and customs their respective races confine them to. Though Tracy Dean, the boy, is a weak shadow of a man and Nonnie, the girl is for the most part a silent, brooding love mate, they are properly orchestrated to carry forth the dramatic appeal Lillian Smith attempts to make. 12-1-45

But rather than motivate these characters into direct conflict with each other as well as the inner conflict within themselves and their environment, the author permits the tale of Maxwell, Georgia to be told in terms of 32 other people. All these people to some degree forward the story without a single one creating a lasting effect on the audience. Lillian Smith should have stuffed her theme down the throat of fewer actors and gained her essential and greater meaning as a result of overtones and implications.

The bulk of the novel was a narrative style largely in exposition at which time the author could explain the behavior of her characters when they themselves couldn't. In the play, this form of writing is taboo. Actors state their premises and struggle to defeat or success in terms of action and counter action. The printed word has one fundamental aspect and that is to appeal to the eye. Words are merely symbols that the reader translates in terms of his own mind—thus creating a mental impression. The stage has two essential aspects, sight and hearing. Actors appeal to the sense of hearing and sight adds an emotional quality that subconsciously drags in the other senses of spectators—and keep them engrossed. Unfortunately Lillian Smith's writing fails to enlist this necessary appeal. 12-1-45

The most disastrous element in STRANGE FRUIT is in the writing. When the play isn't the thing, it is very little else that can be substituted. Jose Ferrer's direction is an ethical follow through on the text of the script without cutting through the maze of words and scenes and giving life, depth and excitement to the story. Of the thirteen scenes of the play, only two really broke through as vital theatre. The memorable scene of Mamie McIntosh, whipping young Henry and planting in his hide and head the fact that he is inferior to white people, is translated with earthly conviction to the stage by Edna Thomas and Ken Rennard. This sequence is terrifying and pathetic—and created for me the one big moment in the play. Juano Hernandez comes near to matching this scene with his explosive soul-searching sequence in Tom Harris's Mill office. But Hernandez slightly overacts near the end which he may have toned down by now.

Whereas most of the scenes fail the actors, rather than the actors fail to bring anything to the scenes, some of the players create some excellent dramatic moments. Dorothy Carter as Bess revealed that she is a dramatic dynamo; George Oliver as Ed handles his role like a real veteran of the stage and was most properly cast; Earl Jones as the big goof, Henry, was excellent in his lighter moments, but merely capable in his heavy ones; Jane White as Nonnie was adequate but in her effort to underplay great moments of tension doesn't quite break through with the pathos intended. 12-1-45

There is a certain amount of truth in the fact that great gripping moments in all plays are unspoken and done in pantomime. utilized this technique for all it was worth in his role. But Melchoir couldn't project the frustration, sympathy, resolve, transition and gripping tragedy the part called for. With the exception of Ralph Theodore as Tom Harris and Jay Norris as the soda jerk, none of the other actors bring their roles and degree of authentication. They don't ooze with any of the deep Georgia mannerism nor behaviorisms that distinguishes that part of the U. S. from any other village.

It is with a great deal of consternation to have to report in the negative on such a play as STRANGE FRUIT. For its theme and what it has to say is the sort of theatre we seldom have a chance to see. But despite good intentions and liberal minds behind them, the theatre demands that regardless of good thoughts begging for a change of the old order, these efforts must be contained in a couple of hours of moving entertainment or flop. STRANGE FRUIT does not move and won't be able to hold out very long.

STARK YOUNG

Mary Hutchinson To Appear At Spelman Friday

Atlanta Daily World
12-5-45

The Mary Hutchinson show will be presented at Spelman College on Friday evening, December 7, in Howe Memorial Hall. Curtain time is at eight.

Miss Hutchinson, a talented young American actress, has designed a unique type of dramatic entertainment. An actress rich in experience, Miss Hutchinson has played leading roles in the Broadway hits "Castles in the Air," "The Yellow Jacket," and Lady Be Good." She has also had exacting roles in radio serials, network work plays and summer theatres.

Strange Fruit, Etc.

Cincinnati

The Mermaids Singing, by John van Druten. The Empire Theatre, November 28, 1945.

Strange Fruit, by Lillian Smith and Esther Smith. Royale Theatre, November 29, 1945.

The New Republic

THERE IS LITTLE TO SAY about Mr. van Druten's new play, "The Mermaids Singing," except that I did not find it tedious, as many people seem to have done. It was literate in the first place and smoothly directed, and well enough cast, with Mr. Walter Abel as the adult playwright, Miss Frieda Inescort as the young heroine's mother, and Miss Beatrice Pearson—a beginner of talent, evidently—as the heroine. 12-17-45

The story deals with a young woman who falls in love with the glamor of the playwright whose new piece is being tried out in some city not New York. She has already had experience with her fiancé, so that the playwright's yielding to temptation would not be quite the usual seduction theme. All turns out well. The play published would make agreeable reading for such persons as like that sort of novel. It steadily presents this effect when you see it on the stage. It is not a stirring effect but it is, at least, not offensive.

"Strange Fruit" is much more difficult to write about. Comparison will inevitably arise between it and "Deep Are the Roots," which is one of the top successes of the season. Both deal with the race question in the South and the

ments appear are much more truly presented. That only makes the whole far more b

I have not read Miss Smi

motives are better handled t

At any rate, as things turn

the play appears to be the f

years of intimacy with this y

throws her over and will tak

more telling were it not for

memorial in drama and tale

mistress when he decided to m

theme involved is, therefore,

There is one really remar

heart-breaking and bitter, w

little white boy and little col

plications of the whole situ

convey here.

Miss Jane White, as the c

white man, was unfortunately

intelligence and great sincerity in

he present is not free in the role,

the colored girl loved by the young

nately disadvantageous to the play's

In comparing the plays, two points immediately appear. The first play is far more expert as stagecraft, infinitely better slicked up for Broadway. Most people on second thought would admit that the latter part gradually breaks down and is unconvincing only by virtue of the accumulated dramatic and emotional momentum. The speeches, instead of being moving and human, turn into trick deliveries unworthy of the character and of the tragic situation. Nevertheless, the play as a whole has a genuine go to it, and the terrific nature of the subject matter is unescapable. "Strange Fruit," taken from the well known novel, is not expertly done as a play, and at times is slow in the directing, unaccountably so, since Mr. Ferrer, the director, knows the theatre well. But it is far truer, far more at home in the South it purports to depict. The prejudices, the faults in the South as shown here, are the same as in "Deep Are the Roots," and any honest Southerner would admit them. But the surrounding qualities and life in which these ele-

Dramatics

American Negro Theatre Winds Up Season With 'Henri Christophe'

The Worker 6-17-45

N.Y., N.Y.

— by Samuel Sillen —

The American Negro Theatre, unlike the more polished and affluent commercial theatre, is dominated by an artistic and social ideal. It is a cooperative acting company that seeks to develop its own theatre craft and acting style. It looks for plays that will significantly describe and interpret Negro life. It derives its strength from a community and it desires, in turn, to make a contribution to the community.

With all its present weaknesses, the American Negro Theatre is never dull, emptily smooth, or stereotyped. True, its tiny Library Theatre up in Harlem is a serious handicap. True, it has not solved the problem of acquiring first-rate scripts, so that its best-known production, Anna Lucasta, was a mechanically transformed play of Polish American life, a mediocre one at that.

This theatre has not fully succeeded as yet in its very ambitious purpose of creating a vital theatre workshop an school affiliated with Negro theatre groups throughout the country. But within five years it has made tremendously important gains. And the hope that it will continue as a permanent group is no longer far-fetched. Its further progress is bound to have a healthy impact on commercial theatre.

NEW HISTORICAL PLAY

As its final production of the season, the American Negro Theatre is presenting **Henri Christophe.** The new play, a historical drama by Dan Hammerman, deals mainly with Haiti's struggle for freedom against the French. The action, coveding the years from 1791 to 1820, is dominated by the powerful figure of Christophe, the Negro leader who purchased his freedom from slavery and rose to the throne of Haiti. 6-17-45

Christophe, like Toussaint L'Ouverture, was influenced by the principles of the American and French Revolutions. He took a prominent part in the insurrection against France, served as general-in-chief of the native forces, was appointed President in 1807, and crowned King in 1812. As monarch of Haiti Christophe practised a personal despotism that led to popular revolt against his rule, and he died by his own hand in 1820.

This is an inherently dynamic theme with significant overtones for

FREDERICK O'NEAL

6-17-45

our own time, especially insofar as the play underscores the struggle against foreign subjection. But the dramatic treatment is disappointing. For one thing, it reduces itself to a drawn-out chronicle touching the highlights of so many events that the play resembles a text-book outline. The absence of a genuine dramatic core is reflected in the treatment of Christophe himself; his character is too superficially drawn to provide a convincing analysis of his tragic development.

RARE QUALITIES

Yet even with the handicap of a loose and often clumsy script (not written by a Negro, incidentally), this production has qualities that are hard to find on Broadway. There is, for example, the imaginative voodoo scene in a forest at midnight, treated with a bold, poetic freedom reminiscent of the earlier O'Neill. The struggle between voodoo and reason is projected effectively, as is the conflict between the alternately haughty and smooth-tongued French conqueror and the folk leader imbued with a passion for freedom. 6-17-45

There is remarkable genuineness in this acting company, for it obviously means what it says when it speaks up against oppression and cruelty. This is not a merely skilful word-game.

Most of the acting credit goes to Frederick O'Neal as Christophe. Mr. O'Neal, who deservedly won a prize for his outstanding performance as the money-sharp brother-in-law in Anna Lucasta, has temporarily left Broadway to undertake this new role. And he is again superb. I feel that he is one of the leading actors on our stage, a man of great natural power, intelligently interpreting his roles, amazingly capable of convincing the audience of his reality. 6-17-45

Of the other roles, interesting performances are given by Yolanda Paterno as the alluring Clodomire, torn between patriotism and love for a French officer; Charles Benton as the massive medicine man who wants to drive out the French with his brew of voodooism; Austin Briggs-Hall as the great champion of the rights of man, Toussaint L'Ouverture; and Edith Whiteman as Christophe's religious wife, who seeks justice in the after-world.

The production is directed by Joe Hill; the costumes and settings are by Charles Sebree

Henri Christophe will be presented through June 30.

Catholics Accept Negroes In Theatre

New York W. G.
Amsterdam News

CHICAGO (ANP).—A Negro theatre group from Richmond, Va., was admitted last week to the National Catholic Theatre conference by unanimous vote. The Virginians were the first Negro Catholic organizations ever to apply for membership.

6-30-45

The Most Rev. Bernard J. Sheil, senior auxiliary bishop of Chicago, established an annual $500 award for a play representative of Catholic philosophy at the conclusion of the theatrical organization's biennial convention.

ICC to Seek Better Drama

Sunday P.M.
N.Y. Daily

Conference Urges National Arts Program

Members of the theatrical industry, meeting at a Conference of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, held Friday and Saturday at the Waldorf-Astoria by the Independent Citizens' Committee, adopted resolutions calling for: 6-24-45

¶ The introduction of an Arts Bill in Congress.

¶ Extension of theater facilities throughout the country by the adoption of programs similar to the one in practice at the New York City Center; such a project to be submitted to the next Conference of Mayors.

¶ An increased awareness on the part of producers and playwrights of their responsibilities "in easing the strain in racial relations" and in keeping out of the theater "stylized characters such as Uncle Tom."

Abram Hill, director of the American Negro Theater, pointing out that the ANT rejects all plays "flavored with minstrel yeasting," asserted that his organization is striving towards the full integration of the Negro actor and playwright into the life of the American theater. 6-24-45

Margaret Webster, Shakespearean director, told the meeting of her experiences with recent tours of *Othello* and *The Cherry Orchard,* which convinced her that the theater audience "is growing, not shrinking."

Moreover, she said, audiences today are not limited "to certain groups of intellectuals," but represent the "broadest mixture of all classes, with young people and the working elements of varying ages predominating."

Walter N. Greaza, assistant executive secretary of Actors Equity, told the meeting that the high rate of unemployment among actors and actresses "who deserve a chance to work like anybody else," might be considerably lessened during the postwar period if the promise of a greater theater audience were made a reality. 6-24-45

Lillian Hellman, the distinguished playwright, was chairman of the meeting.

Actress to play Negro Russian in new comedy

Los Angeles, Calif. Times
10-15-45

NEW YORK — Maude Russell, veteran Broadway actress, has been assigned a part in the new Eugenia Leontovich vehicle, "Caviar to the General," due shortly on Broadway.

Miss Russell will play the part of a Negro Russian girl. She will speak Russian and English with a Russian accent, and is being coached in both by a special tutor. 10-15-45

This will be the second time Miss Russell has appeared in a show with Miss Leontovich. The first was "Dark Eyes."

"Strange Fruit" Has New York Premiere

The Daily Worker
12-7-45

Critics Find It 'Sprawling'

NEW YORK.—(NNPA)—Drama critics found "Strange Fruit," a play based on Lillian Smith's novel of the same name, which had its premier at the Royale theatre last Thursday, "gangling" and "sprawling."

They, however, praised the performance of Jane White, daughter of Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She played the role of a colored girl who is in love with a meek southern white man.

"The 12 scenes of the work rarely fail to hold one's interest," said Howard Barnes of the New York Herald Tribune, "but their progression is somewhat confusing, their import sometimes exotraneous, and their cumulative effect less dynamic and forceful than one might have wished."

Lewis Nichols of the New York Times said the play is "sprawling and too much of its length is verbose, only a few of its many scenes carry the tragedy and angformance of Juano Hernandez as the colored doctor who lynching of the role of a colored girl climax, was described as "excellent" and "superb." 12-7-45

"Champs," Hailed by Over 200,000 GI's Head Home

SOMEWHERE IN INDIA (ANP)—The first all-colored sports show to tour any of the theatres of war is USO-Camp Shows Unit 500, the "Parade of Champions," managed by Dan Burley, New York newspaperman and columnist.

The unit has traveled over 780 miles of the famous Ledo Road; has played Calcutta, Karachi and other large cities and centers in India and is due to return to the States sometime this month.

It will have covered over 90,000 miles of travel by air and jeep; played to more than 200,000 service men, and has been hailed by high military officials as the most unusual show of any type to tour the CBI.

The unit features Henry Armstrong, former triple titleholder; Kenny Washington, All-American halgback, UCLA; Bill Yancey, basketball star, and Joe Lilliard, former University of Oregon All-American.

Written by Burley, who acts as the master of ceremonies, the show is constructed on a theme of achievement built around the exploits of its personnel.

NEWARK, N. J.
CALL
Circ. S. 91,456

JUL 15 1945

The Stage

Plays and Patronage Better in Montclair; Racial Type of Humor Dangerous

By ROBERT C. RING

There's been a steady improvement in plays and patronage at the Montclair Theater. "Her Cardboard Lover," the initial offering, had considerable merit, but was somewhat dated. "Blithe Spirit," the second attraction, was several notches above its predecessor in quality. "Kiss and Tell," which ended a week engagement last night, came even closer to what the customers want. "Male Animal," opening tomorrow, should prove another advance.

Reprint

Jokes using as butts Negroes, Jews or the Irish are, on occasion, funny. More frequently, however, they're in bad taste and they are, no matter how well intentioned the teller, almost always below the belt.

Today, more than ever, this type of humor is dangerous. The gag with a racial minority angle gives an unfair characterization of a people and is used as vicious propaganda by men of ill will.

Vaudeville, musical comedy, radio and night club funnymen unintentionally, in most cases, offend far too often. Variety, true and potent friend of show business, in its current issue has an editorial on the subject. It's reprinted here because I believe it deserves even wider circulation.

"Comedians persist in being among the worst offenders against racial minorities. This is not because comedians are biased, but because so many are thoughtless of consequences. Anything for a giggle. Moreover, a comedian's habit of thinking exclusively in terms of gags, his long conditioning to 'Hebe,' 'Tad' and 'Darkie' stock-in-trade, often makes him unwilling to admit—when challenged—that much of what used to be innocent fun is now vicious political propaganda. Hence where attention has been called from time to time, in the last year or two, to examples of dubious racial humor, a tendency has been observed among comedians which is not encouraging. They do not acknowledge the offense, protest good intention, or indicate a disposition to watch more carefully in the future. Instead they counter-attack.

"And so it goes. On an average an offensive routine or joke important enough to attract Variety's attention—or some reader of Variety—is reported every week. It's bad stuff. It's bad for show business and show people who, more than the average run, need to be understanding, need to set an enlightened example. Too many comedians, announcers, slap-happy emcees are hurting the good cause.

"Variety does not especially like to single out one particular offender while, perhaps, passing up (through not knowing) some who are far worse. Nonetheless, only by citing Chapter and Verse can the issue be driven home, invidious as such finger-pointing may be. But the greater good outweighs the lesser embarrassment.

"Last week, Arthur Godfrey was the bad boy. This glib chap is having quite a success with his new CBS morning revue. He's bright and clever, but—he has yet to address a remark to the Negro talent on his program which is not condescending, which does not infer that the Negroes were out shooting craps the night before. It's undoubtedly not his intention to belittle. Nevertheless that's the net effect. Godfrey has a special intonation for Negroes. Breezy he may be with everybody, but with the Negroes he's old Marse being jovial in Shantytown.

"But perhaps Godfrey's worse misstep recently was his use with Jewish dialect of the dirtily anti-Semitic crack. 'Comes the revolution, the minks will be wearing the people.' Just a throwaway, mind you. Just thoughtless-like. Didn't mean a thing. But millions of people listening in!"

'Jericho' in Rehearsal To Open at Princeton

Princeton University's theatre auditorium which was the first to witness Paul Robeson in "Othello" in this area, will also be the first to see the premier try-out performance of "Walls of Jericho," a new play by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow who penned, "Tomorrow the World," a militant anti-fascist play.

Jericho, which deals with the problems of the south, will have

GORDON HEATH

a mixed cast with Gordon Heath playing the role of a young educated returned veteran of this war. Evelyn Ellis who is a well-known actress, remembered particularly for her fine artistry in the dramatic version of *Porgy*, will also have a prominent role.

George Heller, actor and executive secretary of the American Federation of Radio Artists, and Kermit Bloomgarden, erstwhile business manager for Herman Shumlin, are producing. After a two-day stand at Princeton, the play will move to the Locust Theatre in Philly for two weeks and then into the Fulton Theatre here in New York on September 26.

Will We Flood Broadway With 'Negro Plays?'

Writer Says He'd Not Be Surprised To See 'Lord's Supper' With Negro Cast

By ABE HILL

Negro theatricals this season are reaching proportions which are positively frightening.

Via press, radio and rumors, items are mentioned almost daily that a Negro play or a Negro version of a play is on the way to Broadway. Alarmists have already indicated their skepticism, when during the midsummer the AMSTERDAM NEWS exclusively revealed that there would be approximately twelve shows in which sepia artists would either be the entire cast or a part of it. But since that time, not only are the original twelve still in the making, but at least there are a dozen more sepia or semi-sepia plays to be added to the list.

Plays In The Making

Among those which have been previously mentioned by this writer are STRANGE FRUIT, CARIB SONG, WALK HARD, ST. LOUIS WOMAN, the Arna Bontemps musical, ON WHITMAN AVENUE, the Duke Ellington musical, the BLACK and WHITE REVUE, BLACK BOY, GOODBYE UNCLE TOM, POKE COUNTY, and DEEP ARE THE ROOTS which was formerly WALLS OF JERICHO. Among the new batch which are coming to life since the aforementioned list was made known are a new play being readied for a John Golden production, utilizing the talent of a Negro actress as the central character SPRINGTIME IN BRAZIL, LARRY and JEAN, a Negro version of THE BEGGARS OPERA, ONE FLESH, a musical of Negro life which deals with the lower depths and others the names of which there hasn't as yet been an official announcement made.

An Impossible Load

There is much reason to believe that Broadway won't be able to carry this load of sepia theatricals. This statement isn't being made to arouse one's consciousness to biasness on the "great white way" against Negro effort. It means that approximately one play out of ten has a chance to make the hit classification. This holds true for the average drama and not just among Negro plays. At this rate, it is fair to say that if these dozen plays dealing with Negro characters should by some miracle reach Broadway, only two or three will be able to stay there and draw business.

Several writers have contacted this writer telling them about their plays. Then they anxiously ask whether it wouldn't be a good idea to do them with Negro casts. There is a boom on, which undoubtedly stems from the success of ANNA LUCASTA. My reply is always the same, and that is, if the script is good, honest, pro-Negro and omits the pattern of degradation usually associated with Negro characters on the stage, then the color of the character is not to be so much worried about.

B'way Follows A Trend

Broadway, like Hollywood, follows a trend. The success of ANNA LUCASTA has started a trend or still better a boom. One can only cross their fingers and wait, hoping that the commodity of the boom—the Negro—won't come off on the snorter end of this expanded program of theatricality.

DEEP ARE THE ROOTS and CARIB SONG, both having opened out of town, will be due on Broadway in a few days. STRANGE FRUIT possibly will have been completely cast by the time this story hits the public eye. SPRINGTIME IN BRAZIL, the Milton Berle musical is currently seeking 30 male Negro dancers. So it looks like at least four shows are way past the talking stage and are definitely here or soon will be.

What About Shakespeare?

Can Shakespeare be ignored during a theatrical season? The answer is no. So the work of the Bard is coming into the current boom of Negro theatricals.

88a-1945 Dramatics

Theatre Presents Novel Experimental Play

New York Amsterdam News

THE STORY OF A DARK GIRL and a Greek prince, both of the ancient world, and their struggle to fullfil their true love for each other is the theme of the new American Negro Theatre (ANT) production of "Garden of Time", written and directed by Owen Dodson at the 135th St. Library Theatre. Their bond of love, stronger than eternity, transcends the ages and finally consumates at the turn of the 19th century. Charles Sebrees settings and costumes with the effective staging sets a milestone in experimental Negro theatre. ANT continus to cut new roads in the theatre. Scenes from the play show (top left to right) Austin Briggs-Hall and Gordon Heath, (center) Sadie Browne and Dean Newman, the lovers, (right) Sadie Browne and Elsie Benjamin, (Lower left) Three dancers, Joan Smith, Doris Block and Edith Whitman with Miss Browne, (Right) Miss Browne and Wm. Greanes, in a scene of pathos. (See review of play elsewhere in this issue). 3-17-45

3-17-45

The New Masses N.Y.

THE second production of the season by the American Negro Theater is to be *Garden of Time*, an American interpretation by Owen Dodson of the Greek myth of Medea and Jason and the Golden Fleece. The fantasy opens in Greece and ends in the American South at the turn of the century. It includes music and dancing and is performed by a mixed cast. The presentation will be at the 135th Street Library Theater, New York. 2-27-45

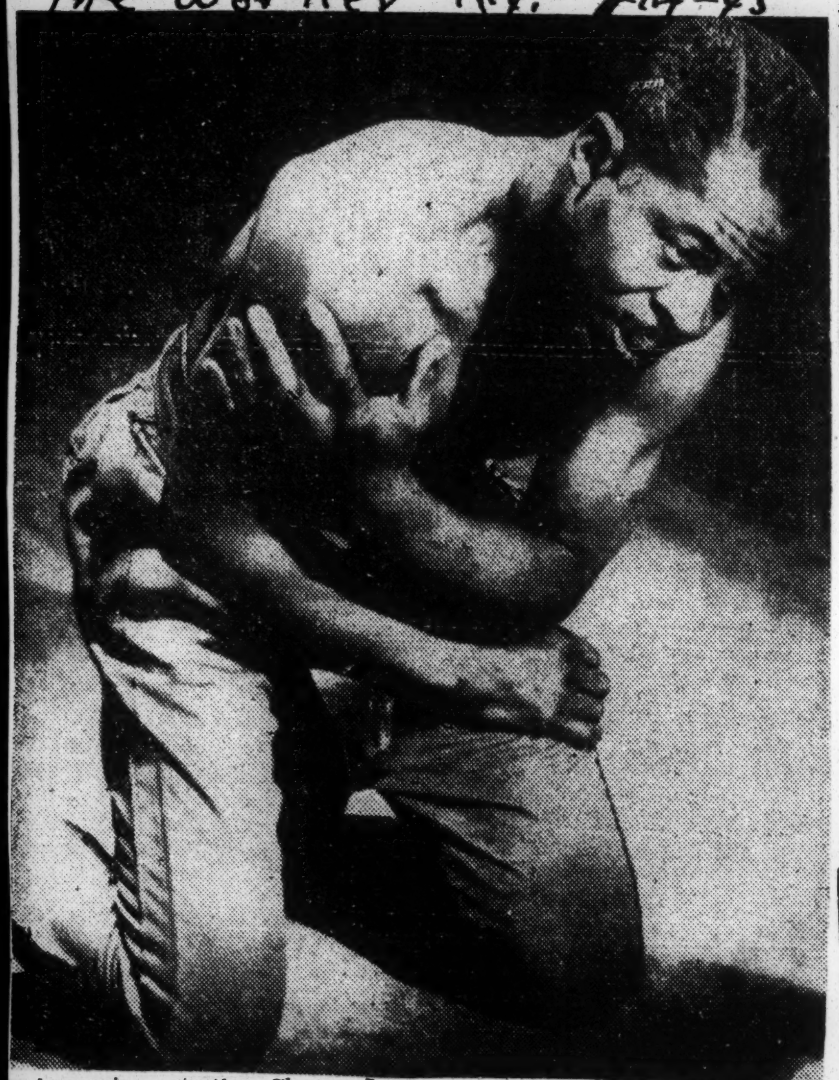
2-27-45

PM-N.Y.N.Y.-3/16/45

Revue Stars Negro Children Young students of Harlem's Mary Bruce dance school, 321 W. 125th St., will appear in a musical revue this Sunday evening at the Belasco Theater. The revue, *Starbuds*, will feature dance numbers by Negro children. Tickets are available at the school.

Hedgerow Theatre Presents A New 'Emperor Jones'

The Worker N.Y. 1-14-45



Appearing at the Cherry Lane Theatre in the Village on Tuesday night, Jan. 16, in the title role of Hedgerow Theatre's production of Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor — Jones" is Arthur Rich, chauffeur, valet, and handy man from Media, Pa. The now famous role, which has been played by such actors as Paul Robeson, Rex Ingram, Charles Gilpin, and Wayland Rudd, is not new to Rich who has played the role opposite Jasper Deeter's Smithers in the Hedgerow repertory since 1931—a total of over 200 performances. It will be remembered that Charles Gilpin and Jasper Deeter originally created the respective roles in the world premiere of the play by the Provincetown Players in 1920.

1-14-45

Rich, now aged fifty, was born and schooled at Cheney, Pa., the son of a chef at Philadelphia's fashionable Cheltenham Military Academy, and was named for Arthur Durnell, West Chester chorister. When World War I came along Rich left his position as valet and enlisted in the 325th Field Signal Battalion, the first Negro signal corps in the history of the United States Army, and as a sergeant served nine months overseas, going into action in the Argonne Forest.

Returning from the war Rich took the position in the home of a prominent Philadelphia attorney which he now holds. He married soon afterward and has raised a family of four children. Today Julie, the eldest is a 2d Lieutenant in the WAAC, having graduated from Morgan College in Baltimore and taken post graduate work at Bryn Mawr College and Pendle Hill. Mary, the next oldest, also joined the WAAC after completing her schooling at Media High School where Arthur Jr. is at present a football player and is awaiting his call from the draft board. Jordan, the youngest, is ten and a student at the Media Public School.

In 1931 Rich joined Hedgerow Theatre as a part-time member. Since then, besides his role of Emperor—Jones, he has played Enos in "No 'Count Boy," Uncle January in "The Man Who Died at Twelve O'Clock," and Lije Hunevcutt in "In Abraham's Bosom"; all by Paul Green. As yet unfulfilled are his ambitions to play "Othello" and O'Neill's "Hairy Ape" with an all Negro cast.

1-14-45

Rich is a member of Fellowship House, a Friends' inter-racial group, and is chairman of the inter-racial playground in his own community. Among his friends and acquaintances are such outstanding artists as Paul Robeson, actor and singer; Dorothy Maynard, opera singer; Abbie Mitchell, actress and concert singer; Langston Hughes, writer; and Josh White, blues and folk singer.

1-14-45

"The Emperor — Jones" will be played again this week on Wednesday, Jan. 17 and Thursday, 18. On Friday night, Jan. 19, the Hedgerow Company will present for the first timei n New York "Tomorrow's Yesterday" by Jack Kinnard, with Catherine Rieser and Jasper Deeter in leading roles. Thunder on the Left," Jean Ferguson Black's adaptation of the Morley novel, will be played on Sunday, 21 and Monday, 22 and "Quintin Quintana" by the Mexican poet and playwrit, Ramon Naya, on Tuesday, 23 and Wednesday 24. The Hedgerow engagement at the Cherry Lane 38 Commerce St., will end on Sunday night, Feb 11.

'GREEN PASTURES' RETURNING IN FALL

Daily Times

3-16-45

Jean Dalrymple Will Revive Prize Play—Marc Connelly to Do the Staging

By SAM ZOLOTOW

"The Green Pastures," a classic of the modern theatre, will be revived as an independent offering next October by Jean Dalrymple. Suggested by Roark Bradford's Negro Bible stories, "Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun," Marc Connelly wrote and directed the Pulitzer Prize play of the 1929-30 season. At present associated with Miss Dalrymple as co-sponsor of "Hope for the Best," Mr. Connelly again will attend to the staging.

3-16-45

One of the problems confronting Miss Dalrymple is to find a suitable Negro actor to follow in the footsteps of the late Richard Harrison, who achieved fame for his portrayal of de Lawd. (Remember how he came on the stage to the stirring introduction of "Gangway for de Lawd!"?)

First presented by Rowland Stebbins, the play opened at the Mansfield on Feb. 26, 1930, and was a resounding success. It brought forth this comment by Brooks Atkinson: "And Marc Connelly has lifted his fable of the Lord walking on the earth to those exalted heights where utter simplicity in religious conception produces a play of great emotional depth and spiritual exaltation—in fact the divine comedy of the modern theatre."

3-16-45

Exactly to the day five years later Mr. Stebbins revived it at the Forty-fourth Street.

Earl Jones Came Up the Hard Way

Daily Worker

By ANNE SEYMOUR

Earl Jones was, several years ago, a teacher of English, elocution and diction in WPA classes in Harlem. Now he enacts a 250-pound Basuto who cannot speak or understand the English language—in John Patrick's comedy hit, **The Hasty Heart** at the Hudson. Born in Mississippi, Mr. Jones attended school there and took an active part in dramatics. After completing his high school studies, Mr. Jones came to New York to try his luck.

"Ever since I can remember, I was always dabbling around in theatricals," says Mr. Jones. "So, after knocking around here for quite a bit, I finally got together a club of teen-agers, organized them, and we began to put on plays. We hired a huge and dusty loft up at 125 St., gave it a good scrubbing and painted it up somewhat, and called it the **Suitcase Theatre**, because it could be moved about without a truck. We put on all kinds of plays there . . . but mostly one-acters, the most notable being **Don't You Want to Be Free**, which Langston Hughes authored. We charged 35c admission, and the money we derived from our customers help to pay the rent."

Earl Jones

5-8-45

TAUGHT IN HARLEM

While busying himself with the Suitcase Theatre, Jones managed to take some courses at New York University. He also became interested in the American Negro Theatre, and began to do some odd jobs there, finally becoming a stage manager.

"When the **Suitcase Theatre** folded its doors, I still continued to work with the American Negro Theatre, but I was lucky enough to get a teaching job with the WPA classes in Harlem. I taught sociology for some months, and then I got two more classes, and I soon found myself teaching not only sociology but English, diction, and dramatics. But when the WPA was abolished, I still was with the American Negro Theatre. . . ."

3-8-45

And this brings us up to this past fall, where a very amusing incident occurred. It was on a cool day in October that three gentlemen came up to Harlem to visit the famous 'Vishing Tree, which graces Seventh Ave. near 132 St. These gentlemen, Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, had coaxed Captain John Patrick, author of their forthcoming **The Hasty Heart** to come up and visit the famous tree, in the hope of finding a 260-pound Basuto for their play. All three looked at the stump of the tree; they read the inscription on it:

5-8-45

"Tree of Hope, beloved of the people of Harlem, you wished for a tree of Hope. . . . So here 'tis. Best wishes, Bill Robinson."

Mr. Crouse sighed and sat down on the stump of the tree, and as he did so his eye fell on the Library recommended the stage manager of the American Negro Theatre, a man called Earl Jones, and that's how Mr. Jones came to get his first Broadway break!

Theatre across the street, where the American Negro Theatre held forth. "That must be our answer," he said, and soon he was talking to Abram Hill, the director. Mr. Hill heartily

Robeson Terms "Strange Fruit" Prophetic Play

The Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

NEW YORK — Paul Robeson, singer-actor, this week expressed himself as wishing every American could see "Strange Fruit," Lillian Smith's dramatization of her novel, now playing at the Royale Theatre, following a review.

Said Mr. Robeson in a telegram to Jose Ferrer, producer of the play:

"Strange Fruit" was for me a deeply moving experience in terms of the theatre. Its quiet and deadly atmosphere was and is that of and Southern town.

A Prophetic Play

"For me it is a prophetic play. Here colored people of high quality suffer the terrible frustrations of a prejudice-ridden society. Sam's last speech is a clear warning that we can't take anymore. America should heed this.

"The love theme is most tenderly treated and beautifully played by Melchor Ferrer and Jane White.

"The scene of Edna Thomas with the children is unbearable in its tragic insistence upon a separation that can only lead to injustice and conflict. I wish that every American could see this moving and prophetic play."

Senator Theodore Bilbo turned down na invitation to attend a performance of the play saying in part he "would be ashamed."

The Worker - New York N.Y.

12-23-45

MAXWELL GLANVILLE, recently of the AAF, and pioneer American Negro Theatre actor, plays one of the leading male roles in the ANT production of "Home is the Hunter," a drama by Samuel M. Kootz, which opened Thursday at the new ANT playhouse, 15 West 126th St.

American Negro Theatre Opens New Home, But Play Disappoints

Daily Worker

by Samuel Sillen

WITH the housing crisis growing more acute, it is happy news that the American Negro Theatre has at last found a home of its own. 12-24-45

The new ANT Playhouse at 15 W. 126 St. is wonderfully commodious by comparison with the tiny basement of the Harlem Library in which for five years this band of players bravely huddled. The audience no longer cramps the stage; there is ample room for stage design; lights and curtain work like magic.

The ANT group, directed by Abram Hill, saw their dream come true last Thursday night. Mrs. Roosevelt and other distinguished guests were present. And all of us who knew under what difficulties the ANT has labored, rejoiced in this event, with its promise of new triumphs.

new York, N.Y.

BUT now that the housing problem has been solved there is still a script question to be overcome. The sad truth is that Samuel Kootz' "Home Is the Hunter" is a poor play that fails to give the American Negro Theatre a chance to express its real talent.

Mr. Kootz, who operates an art gallery on 57 St. and has previously written detective novels, deals with a serious and timely theme. He introduces a soldier, Dawson Drake, Jr., who returns from Germany hopped up with fascist ideas. Inheriting his father's huge factory, he wants to beat down the unions and help American big business succeed where the Nazis, through "over-haste" failed.

The soldier discovers that his wife hates his ideas and the sexual brutality to which they are linked. Owing a third share in the factory, she joins with a union leader in trying to persuade Drake's father that the workers should share the profits. The vet shoots his wife and the labor leader, and the curtain drops as the senior Drake calls the police to nab his son.

If this sounds heavily melodramatic, it corresponds, I fear, to the actual effect of the play. And this is all the more unfortunate because Mr. Kootz, despite astonishing illusions about profit-sharing and a one-sided impression of veterans, is seriously troubled about the menace of fascism lurking in anti-labor attitudes. new York, N.Y.

But the impact of his ideas is not felt, for he has thought it sufficient to get people to talk on the stage on a single level, very repetitiously, and to underline his points with a verbal emphasis that cannot substitute for dramatic development. The promising players—Elwood Smith, Clarice Taylor, Maxwell Glanville and Evelio Grillo—find it difficult to break out of the play's rigid mold.

* * *

SOME people may say: Why not overlook some of the artistic faults, since after all the play does try to deal with a social problem? Aren't you discouraging social drama by this approach?

But I feel very strongly that the serious difficulties of getting social drama produced will not be solved by insincere praise. The real threat to social drama comes from inept treatment as drama. And I hope that the American Negro Theatre group will interpret the generally cool response their new effort has received in the press not as their cue to abandon social themes, but as a reminder that social themes poorly conceived have little effect either as art or as social meaning.

* 12-24-45

IN THIS respect, I was interested to learn the feeling of Abe Hill, ANT's director, toward "Strange Fruit." He considers the play sprawling; he feels the characters are not "explained," as a result he finds that in contrast to his excitement when he saw "Deep Are the Roots," he felt indifferent when viewing "Strange Fruit."

ABRAM HILL

This is exactly the point. "Strange Fruit" happens to be a poor play, and whatever its potentially significant meanings, it leaves me, as it does Abe Hill, quite cold. And I sympathize with the judgment of the audience attending the discussion between Mr. Hill and Lillian Smith at last week's forum in Harlem under the auspices of the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature. The general consensus, I learn by a news release on the meeting, was that Miss Smith "should have called in a professional playwright to make 'Strange Fruit' the Broadway hit it deserved to be."

I not that the ANT calls for plays that illuminate and interpret contemporary life. This is an invitation that all progressive playwrights will do well to consider. 12-24-45

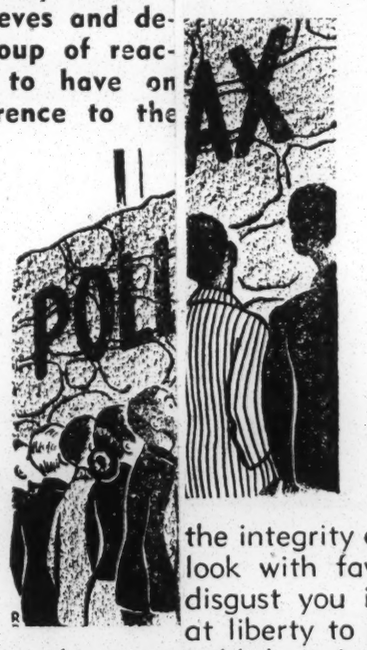
BILBO GIVES "STRANGE FRUIT" HIGHEST RECOMMENDATION

Peoples Voice

New York, N.Y.

By FREDI WASHINGTON

"STRANGE FRUIT" is a play about human beings trapped and destroyed by segregation—the prevailing pattern of our white culture, is the way Lillian Smith, author and playwright, sums up in part her play at the Royale theatre which critics of southern extraction on the metropolitan press, said is boring. Because Lillian Smith is a tiny capsule of dynamite against discrimination and from Clayton, Ga., she has rolled up her fighting sleeves and declared war on that influential group of reactionaries who would prefer not to have on display in the theatre, any reference to the phony superior attitude of white America. 12.22.45



The little lady is not alone in her belief that what **Strange Fruit** has to say is what all of America should listen to and examine. Jose Ferrer, producer and director of the play is equally as determined not to leave a stone unturned to see that this important message is brough to the widest possible public. In line with this reasoning, the first person Mr. Ferrer decided needed to see the show was Senator Theodore G. Bilbo. An invitation was extended to the number one American traitor to see **Strange Fruit** on the house. Bilbo's reply to the invitation is reprinted here:

"Your kind telegram of December five inviting me to be your guest at a performance of **Strange Fruit** was received today. Thanks. Personally I would be ashamed to attend such a performance. I have read **Strange Fruit** by that outstanding white quisling of the south who has repudiated her native heath, her race and the integrity of her blood in writing the vilest and dirtiest book of this generation. I fully share the opinion of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts in their outstanding denunciation of this immoral and contaminating book.

"Strange Fruit is a lie on the south. It is an insult to the white race. It is a puny effort to glorify a love affair between a prostitute Negro woman and a profligate white. It does not tell the truth about the south but it was written to please and glorify the American Negro and to humiliate the southern white man and southern woman. It is as insulting to the south as **Deep Are The Roots** where two negrophiles insult the womanhood of the south by trying to show a decent white woman of the south begging a Negro upstart to marry her.

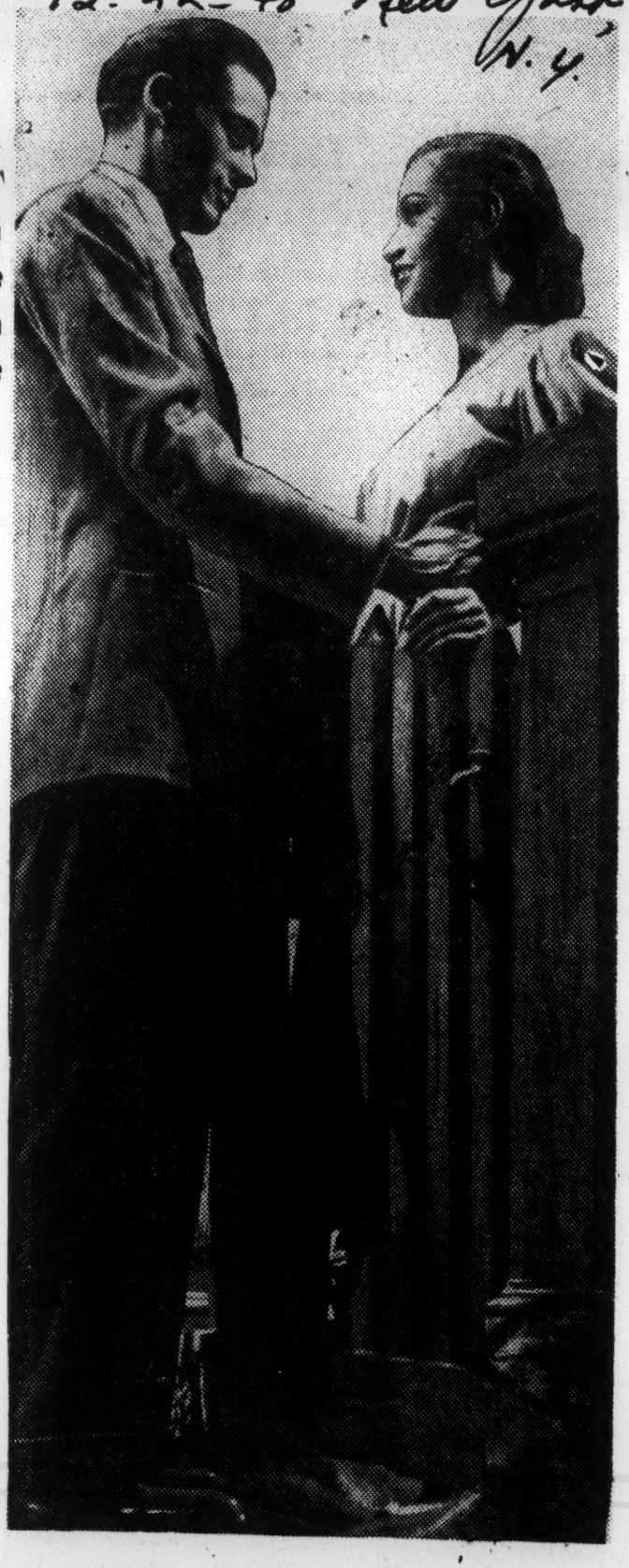
"Of course **Strange Fruit** is pleasing to all Negroes and that small segment of the white race that believes in social equality with the Negro, miscegenation and the intermarriage of the races, and that class of white that would sell the integrity of the white race down the river for pelf and power. 12.22-45

"Of course I am in favor of segregation of the races. Yes, I believe in the separation of the Negro race from the whites for the protection of both races. If your mentality and taste will permit, I trust you will enjoy the show but it is hard for me to believe that any white man or white woman who has any regard for the integrity of the blood of the white race could look with favor upon **Strange Fruit.** It should disgust you instead of entertain you. You are at liberty to publish this telegram provided you publish it in full. Thanks again for your invitation." 12.22.45

And, dear readers, this telegram for which you and you and you pay, was signed, Theo. G. Bilbo. Since everyone is familiar with the dear Senator's mental gyrations on his pet theme, race, this telegram should be considered the biggest boost the show has had to date notwithstanding Paul Robeson's reaction to the play. Mr. Robeson said: **"Strange Fruit** was for me a deeply moving experience in terms of the theatre. Its quiet and deadly atmosphere was and is that of any southern town. For me it is a prophetic play; here colored people of high quality suffer the terrible frustrations of a prejudice-ridden society. Sam's last speech is clear warning we can't take it anymore. America should heed this. The scene of Edna Thomas with the children is unbearable in its tragic insistence upon a separation that can only lead to injustice and conflict. I wish that every American could see this moving and prophetic play."

LOVE IN GEORGIA

12.22-45 New York, N.Y.



Melchor Ferrer and Jane White

88a-1945

Dramatic

CULTURE AND THE FUTURE

New Masses
N.Y., N.Y.
2-6-45

NEW MASSES' *cultural awards dinner, held last week, was a memorable event. It expressed a comprehensive unity which is a distinctly new phenomenon in our cultural life. Not only on the platform, but among the audience were noted figures in the cultural world. Their presence was a fitting answer to the attempts of Roy Howard's man, Frederick Woltman, to Red-bait the dinner in the New York "World-Telegram" and sneer away the awards as "Browder Pulitzer Prizes." And the program articulated the faith that, in the words of NM editor Joseph North, "we stand on the threshold of a great renaissance of culture in America." The role of* NEW MASSES *itself in furthering that culture and providing the social and political vision that the times require emerged clearer than ever. Throughout the storms of the past few years the magazine has held high two important values, the worth of culture and the worth of American democracy. And it chose the recipients of the awards on the same basis—men and women whose contributions and work have served these two values.*

One important feature of the awards was the recognition accorded to the educational and cultural activities of organizations and institutions as well as individuals. Awards were given to three trade unions, the United Automobile Workers-CIO, the National Maritime Union, and the International Fur and Leather Workers Union, to the International Workers Order, and the 135th Street (Harlem) branch of the New York Public Library.

A detailed account of the dinner will be found in the "Between Ourselves" section of this issue. We present below the speeches of Howard Fast, author of "Freedom Road" and other novels; Daniel Fitzpatrick, cartoonist of the St. Louis "Post-Dispatch"; and Max Weber, noted painter; the statement of John Howard Lawson; the messages of the dinner's two co-chairmen, Senator Elbert D. Thomas of Utah and Paul Robeson; and the brief remarks of Fredi Washington, who received an award in behalf of Lena Horne, and Florence Eldridge March, who accepted in the name of her husband, Fredric March. The speeches of Quentin Reynolds, Carl Van Doren, Joseph North and others will appear next week.

Sullivan Recalls Some Pleasant Grazing

P.M. N.Y., N.Y.
3-22-45

By FRANK SULLIVAN

The news that *The Green Pastures* is to be revived is the best news this department has heard in a month of Sundays. We'd rather see that play again than take Quebec with Montreal thrown in.

Yet we wish we had never seen *The Green Pastures,* for the reason ascribed to the gentleman who told Mark Twain he regretted having read *Huckleberry Finn* because now he was forever denied the pleasure of reading it for the first time.

3-22-45

How good it will be to see the Angel Gabriel stride onstage and hear him announce: "Make way foh de Lawd God Jehovah!" And then the simple, kind old gentleman in the black frock coat walks on, in the most impressive entrance an actor probably ever had. It will be heart-warming to hear the little daisies again, saying: "We OK, Lawd," when De Lawd asks: "How all you little daisies makin' out?" And as heartwarming to watch again the scene in De Lawd's office, with Gabriel itching to blow that promised blast on his trumpet, and De Lawd, seeing what his vassal is up to without turning around, cautions: "Watch yo'self, Gabe!"

3-22-45

After Marc Connelly had fashioned his play from Roark Bradford's stories, it was read and turned down by several cautious managers, whose faces after that triumphant first night were rather red. The play finally came into the hands of a broker named Rowland Stebbins, who liked the theater and had produced a play or two. It was Mr. Stebbins of Wall St. who had the courage to back the play that broke with tradition twice by presenting God actually on the stage and by presenting Him as a colored man.

We were going into Jim Moriarty's haven on E. 61st St. one afternoon for our 5 o'clock glass of courage and soda and met Marc Connelly and a stranger leaving. Marc said: "Meet the sucker! This is Rowland Stebbins, who has just decided to produce *The Green Pastures.*" Soon afterward we went to a rough rehearsal of the play and even in that stage it was so moving that we left the theater with a tonsil full of manfully strangled tears.

There were plenty of headaches for Messrs. Stebbins and Connelly before the play opened. They had a time convincing the fine, old gentleman, Richard Harrison, that it was not blasphemous for him to enact the Lord on the stage. It was the late Bishop Shipman who convinced Mr. Harrison that it would be not only blasphemous, but an act of reverent worship.

How would the public react to the presentation of God on a stage? How would the authorities react? This department can guess how the current authorities would have reacted, had they been reigning municipally in the early '30s. Fortunately for *The Green Pastures,* and the drama, they were not.

3-22-45

Mr. Harrison himself was nervous and uncertain when the day of the opening arrived. It was his first venture in a real play, and he was an old man. Connelly was afraid Mr. Harrison would go up in his lines at the opening and had prompters concealed in every possible hiding place in the wings. But once the curtain rose Harrison was the trouper, and he not only sailed through his own part, but cued several colleagues who stumbled.

After the curtain came down on the first act all doubts had vanished. It was one of the two most exciting first nights we ever witnessed. (The other was a play by a couple of *World* colleagues, called *What Price Glory?*) *The Green Pastures* left the critics so excited that one of them, Robert Littell of the *World,* did not attempt a review that night. He filed a paragraph notifying *World* readers that an historic night had taken place in the theater, and he would write in detail about it when he calmed down the next day.

Canada Lee Is Hit on Broadway

Kansas City Call
Kansas City, Mo.
3-30-45

By ALVIN MOSES

NEW YORK. — (ANP) — Margaret Webster's "Tempest," a William Shakespeare comedy, produced by Cheryl Crawford, opened at the Alvin theatre, Thursday night.

I had a selfish interest in wishing to see the opening as did perhaps hundreds of dwellers of that metropolitan area commonly referred to as Harlem. The presence of Canada Lee, noted actor, who was chosen by Miss Webster for the difficult role of "Caliban," held major interest for this commentator.

2-9-45

The role of Caliban, a monster-like creation of Shakespeare's fertile brain, was no small assignment to state the matter mildly.

Lee, in one all inclusive word, was . . . superb. His performance could easily be tomorrow's yardstick for Shakespeare players, so moving and realistic was his unforgettable performance.

People's Voice N.Y.C.
3-10-45

EARL JONES gives one of the great performances of the current Broadway season as he portrays the role of an inarticulate Bess to in "The Hasty Heart." . . . Mississippi born, he came to New York and taught WPA classes from '35 to '38. . . .

IN LONG-RUN PLAY

New York Times
3-22-45

Frederick O'Neal, in Philip Yordan's "Anna Lucasta," which achieves its 200th performance tonight at the Mansfield Theatre.

Organized a suitcase theatre in Harlem and when one of the actors left the show had to do role although he had no idea of going into the theatre. . . . Has appeared in plays for the American Negro Theatre. . . . First professional role was with Katherine Cornell in "Herod and Marianne." . . . Felt the theatre offered too insecure a future and so took a job as a welder and was doing that when Russel Crouse and Howard Lindsay tapped his 300 lb. frame for "Heart'

Director of Robeson's Othello tells trials of production

Los Angeles Tribune — Col.
2-5-45

Some of the background of the production of "Othello" with Paul Robeson in the title role, was told last week by Margaret Webster, eminent Shakespearean dramatic authority and director of the current Theatre Guild production.

Writing in the People's World, Miss Webster called the production a "landmark in the American theatre and in the history of American social consciousness."

Detailing the reburrs her own and Robeson's desire to do the play received, Miss Webster said she does not think "the phenomenal success of the play could possibly have happened even five years ago. Perhaps", she added, "the new awareness brought about by the war has been partly responsible."

The idea of producing "Othello" in America with Paul Robeson was seized upon by the two of them in 1937, Miss Webster said: Robeson had played the role in England in 1930 but had willingly let 7 years go by without attempting it here, if for no other reason than that he was uncertain of his ability. In that 7 years, however, he studied languages, which, according to Miss Webster, taught him the power and beauty of words; he acted and sang.

The pair went the rounds of New York's theatrical management; hunted a backer and sounded out star actors for the other principal roles. 2-5-45

EVERYBODY SCARED

"Everybody was scared", reported Miss Webster. "Most of them said an American audience would never come to a theatre to see a black man play a love scene with a white woman . . .

"A few fell back on the scholastic arguments . . . that Othello was a Moor, not a Negro, or expressed doubts as to Robeson's technical equipment as an actor; but mostly they were just plain scared of the issues which the production would raise."

Disappointed, but not defeated, the director and the actor decided in 1942 to try out the production at a pair of summer little theatres at their own expense.

Playing concurrently at two theatres, they had the advantage of having university audiences as one was in Cambridge, Mass., site of Yale, and the other at Princeton.

"We knew we should meet the test reviews of the Boston critics", Miss Webster recalled.

"When the final curtain fell, the audience cheered and roared and clapped and yelled until we thought the corrugated iron roof would split. And within 24 hours the long-distance telephone was cluttered with New York managers asking could they please be allowed a "piece of the show".

The show was produced a year later in New York, the delay occasioned by Robeson's concert committments. He used the year, however, to perfect himself in the role, and "on opening night, history repeated itself and even more impressively.

"I have never, in any theatre in the world", said Miss Webster, "heard a tribute so wholeheartedly, so tremendously, so deeply moving as was paid that night at the Shubert Theatre to the first black Othello to appear in the United States since Ira Aldridge in the 19th Century. It was a night of theatre magic, a night to justify the theatre's claim to be numbered among the great arts." 2-5-45

Miss Webster quoted an eidtorial from the New York Herald Tribune to explain the significance of the feat of record breaking performances in New York and on the road of a Shakespearean play. Said the Tribune:

". . . The run of the play is a tribute to the art that transcends racial boundaries. The fact that it is considered noteworthy that a Negro should play Othello is a sufficient commentary on the raw edges of prejudice that are continually abraded afresh by the friction of various groups within the United States . . . But it is surely a recognition of the essential folly of such group antagonisms—a sign of hope for the future — when a Negro actor of the caliber of Mr. Robeson is so enthusiastically welcomed into the great tradition of the English-speaking stage in a part of such power and nobility as Othello.

. . . Although Will Shakespeare would doubtless be extremely surprised to learn of the social significance his tragedy has acquired in a new world, it is, as it happens, uniquely adapted to serve as a vehicle for conveying mutual understanding and mutual respect."

"Prejudice has not entirely ceased", Miss Webster observed, "the chorus of praise is occasionally pointed up by a scream of abuse . . . We have refused to perform in any theatre whose management exercises discrimination in seating Negroes in the auditorium. We cannot appear in Washington for this reason. We have only won a little fight in a great battle. But it is something to have won even that."

In closing, Miss Webster quoted a passage from a letter received from a serviceman, which, she said, is the tribute appreciated most by the cast. The soldier wrote: 2-5-45

"Last Saturday night I saw 'Othello'. It took a lot of coaxing to get four soldiers to spend a Saturday night, of the first weekend leave in a month, in a theater watching something by Will Shakespeare. You didn't know what was at stake when the curtain went up—my life, practically. Well, what followed is only natural. We all of us, for those few brief hours, went into a trance; we were living every emotion of the play. (One was a first sarge, and my dear Miss Webster, that which moves a first sergeant is almost miraculous.) . . . I'm not a critic, just a soldier. And I speak as a soldier when I say that each night when the curtain goes up at the Shubert, each and every one of you, from prop man to extra to star, is fighting a war against our common enemy . . . In this production of a great classic you have given five soldiers reason enough to win this war . . . Incidentally, going back on the troop train (it's a six-hour ride), for the first time in my career I saw five soldiers sprawled over the seats, feet in the air, sleeves rolled up, shirts open, reading, of all things, a thing called 'Othello'."

Negro Drama Group Formed

N.Y. Times 1-34-45

The Negro Drama Group, designed to "bring to the front the Negro, his talents and his capabilities as an actor," has been organized under the directorship of Powell Lindsay, it was announced yesterday. The new group will present its version of such stage successes as "Night Must Fall," which will be offered early next month at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall. The company includes Alma Forrest, Jimmy Wright, Muriel Gaines, Grafton Trew, Ramona Lowe. and Fanny Peele. N.Y., N.Y.

Negro Drama Group Back Again With Psycho Thriller Fri., Sat., Sun.

Peoples Voice — New York, N.Y.

Lovers of the heavier type adult drama and campaigners for a bigger and better theatre get their second major treat of the current season this weekend when the Negro Drama Group, under the direction of Powell Lindsay presents the psychological thriller **Night Must Fall** for three nights. The play will be presented at the Henry Lincoln Johnson Lodge Elks home over on 126 st, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. 5-5-45

Appearing prominently in the cast of the Emlyn Williams thriller will be Alma Forrest, best remembered for her vivid portrayal in the *Great White Fog;* Jimmy Wright, who appeared with such success on Broadway as one of the Scottsboro boys in *They Shall Not Die;* Muriel Gaines, who appeared in the musical *Early To Bed* on Broadway last season; Grafton Trew, one of the most promising young actors hereabouts; Tommy Moore, who has been seen featured in several movie shorts, and Mr. Lindsay himself. 5-5-45

Dodson's Fantasy Has Premiere in New York

AFRO-AMERICAN, Balto. Md.
3-17-45

NEW YORK—"Garden of Time, a fantasy by Owen Dodson, and staged by the American Negro Theatre, had its premiere last Wednesday at the Library Theatre here and will be staged Wednesday through Saturday nights until April 14.

The play is an interpretation of the Greek myth revolving around Medea, Jason and the Golden Fleece. Beginning in Greece, the climax takes place in the southern part of the United States at the turn of the century.

Prominent in the cast of eleven, nine colored and two white players, are Sadie Brown, Dean Newman, Gordon Heath, Austin Briggs-Hall and William Greaves.

Mr. Dodson, former head of the drama department at Hampton Institute, Va., where he left to enlist in the Navy from which he received a medical discharge in October 1943, after a year's service, is at present working on documentary films for the American Film Center. 3-17-45

"Garden of Time" is the work of Mr. Dodson, who also directs the play, which represents his first attempt to invade this city's theatrical swirl.

New Negro Repertory Theatre Opens Its Doors on Dec. 22

The Worker N.Y., N.Y.
12-9-43

Under the aegis of Dr. William F. Dunn and Georges D. Gersene, a new professional Negro repertory theatre will come into being. The organization, to be known as the McKinley Square Players, will open its doors on Saturday night, Dec. 22 at the McKinley Square Theatre in the Bronx with a production of that highly successful comedy "Arsenic and Old Lace." The play will be directed by Otto Simetti. The agenda of the McKinley Square Players calls for the production of plays on a two week run basis. They will then be withdrawn and replaced by succeeding works. A permanent repertory company will be maintained, composed of outstanding

Life in the original production of "Porgy and Bess" and who has been seen featured in several movie shorts, and Mr. Lindsay himself.

Mortimer, the recalcitrant dramatic

supported by a company which includes actress, Abbit

12-9-43

d Mr. Gersene e of their com- de a forum for tors on a per- ous basis. They than the oc- als for the use e U. S. theatre

of a Negro actor, the U. S. theatre

CRITICAL and AMUSEMENTS

PM Visits:

Owen Dodson, New Writer

P.M. N.Y.C.N.Y. 3-2-45

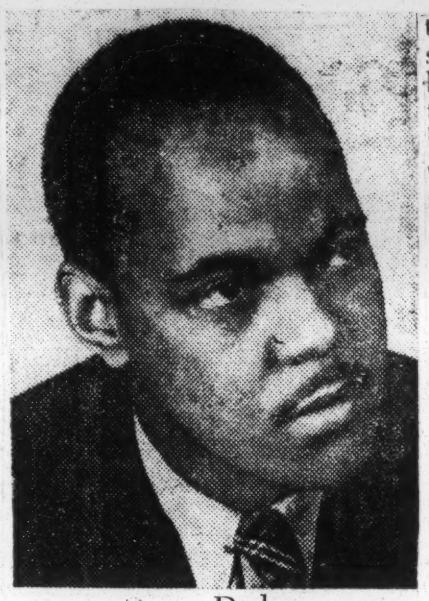
In the tiny basement theater of the 135th Street Library, where *Anna Lucasta* once pursued her restless existence, the American Negro Theater will tonight offer a new conception of the Greek legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece. Called *Garden of Time*, it is the work of Owen Dodson, young New Yorker, and represents his first assault upon this city's theatrical windmills.

Dodson broke away from rehearsals yesterday to talk to us about his play. The small stage seemed spacious and imposing, with classic Greek pillars at the rear and up front to one side a dark tree, its branches spreading snakelike across the stage to form a proscenium arch. Dodson wore informal rehearsal clothes, brightened by a basque shirt with its stripes running diagonally.

We said the Golden Fleece story was a little hazy, we hadn't read it since high school days. Dodson laughed. "I came to know it the same way," he said, "back in Thomas Jefferson High School. But I had ample opportunity to become familiar with it. I flunked Latin and had to go over the story of Jason for two years not one."

Two things interested him, Dodson said, in bringing the Greek myth to life on the stage. "I want to give the Negro a wider scope for his artistry. We have been so limited in what we have been allowed to do in the theater. Remember Rose McClendon? She was a very wonderful person, an actress who had the long line. But she never got a chance to use her voice, her speech, her great passion. Mammies, servants, and even those were infrequent."

The second thing about the play, Dodson told us, was that "it is an attempt to enlarge the theater, to let out the stops. *Garden of Time* is an ambitious play and maybe it won't work out at all. But I believe the modern drama is too stingy.



Owen Dodson

P.M. N.Y.C.N.Y.

We don't use it for all it's worth.

"In *Garden of Time*, whether it is a success or failure, there is love and death and ambition and weakness. The whole play is told in terms of the fable of the Golden Fleece, instead of hard, realistic terms. It uses music and song and dance and poetry 3-2-45

"It begins in ancient times in Colchis off the coast of Asia Minor and ends in a graveyard in Georgia, U. S. A., at the end of the 19th century. It's the story of one country, Greece, the ruling country of the world, going to a smaller country, Colchis, whose people are a dark people and trying to take its emblems. Jason, the Greek, captures the Golden Fleece, aided by Medea, priestess of Colchis, who has fallen in love with him. They flee to Greece, killing Medea's brother in their flight.

"Two children are born to them but eventually Jason deserts Medea. 'You're dark,' he tells her, 'I can't stand you.' Actually he is spurred on by the chance of marriage with Creusa and its promise of new wealth and possessions."

Dodson said that at this point the play switches to the end of the last century, with Georgia substituting for Greece and Haiti for Colchis. The same plot line and central characters continue and the Greek concept of vengeance and expiation is realized through Mama Leua, a Haitian practitioner of voodoo, the counterpart of the ancient goddess Hecate.

"Jason and Medea could have gotten along together," Dodson said, "but these passions that move them—ambition, lust, greed—destroy them. They realize what has been wrong when the play comes to its end but it is too late to turn back. The play foreshadows an end of all this, however, as the 19th century Medea says:

The rats been eating at the
seeds of time,
Eaten full the gullet
But the end's coming.

Dodson has written other plays, one on Father Divine which he wrote when he was taking his MA at the Yale School of Drama. He was head of the drama department at Hampton Institute after finishing at Yale—"the first time I was ever head of anything."

He left Hampton to enlist in the Navy from which he received a medical discharge in October, 1943, after a year's service. He is presently working on documentary films for the American Film Center.

Dodson said he had written plays in the Navy, too. "They looked at me with what-the-devil-can-we-do-with-you look in their eyes when I went in. Finally I got into morale work at Great Lakes. We gave a series of plays about our allies and enemies. China, South America and one about Dorie Miller too.

"We did one on Russia," Dodson said. "Before we put it on, we were called in. 'Hmmmm, a play about Russia,' the officer said dubiously.

" 'Why sure, you know, Russia's our ally,' we said.

" 'Well,' he said, 'you know, just don't . . .' 3-2-45

"The play was given on a big stage in the middle of a great hall. The platform was really a prize-fight ring. It started off with drums rolling and a huge red light flooding the stage. Then six fellows ran out, each carrying a huge red banner and waving it like mad all over the stage."

Dodson paused a moment, smiling in recollection. "I was transferred soon after," he said finally.

—SEYMOUR PECK

e Owens to Head First USO Sports Unit Overseas

AFRO-AMERICAN Baltimore, Md. 1-27-43

NEW YORK—The first all-colored sports unit is being prepared for overseas by USO-Camp Shows, Inc., of which Dick Campbell is coordinator of colored talent.

The unit will include Jesse Owens, Olympic track star; Henry Armstrong, boxer; Kenny Washington, UCLA footballer; Brud Holland, ex-Cornell star; Satchel Paige, baseball star, and Fay Young, ex-sportswriter.

The unit is being readied for three months offshore tour beginning in mid-February.

Since the USO was organized in 1942, Camp Shows has employed 414 colored performers representing approximately 212 acts.

The organization now has 127 colored performers on its roster, including eight tab units, two victory units; and one hospital unit on the home front.

There are two variety units, one concert unit, one band unit and the "Porgy and Bess" troupe overseas.

ENTERTAIN NEGRO SAILORS—Stars of "Three's a Family," comedy drama now on tour in the Central Pacific area, are shown with the commanding officer and three Negro officers at the Manana Naval Barracks on Oahu Hawaiian Islands where many Negro sailors are quartered. Left to right are Ensign J. W. Arbor, Chicago; Charles Butterworth and Luella Gear, both of the d r a m a s' cast; Lt. Commander Grady Avant, commanding officer, Manana Barracks; Ann Mason of "Three's a Family" cast; Lt. Edward Hope, highest ranking Negro officer in the Navy, son of the late Atlanta University president, who enlisted from Howard University, Washington, D. C.; and Boatswain G. B. Lear of Lake Forest, Illinois. (Official U. S. Navy Photo from OWI.)

Atlanta World 2-23-45

Atlanta, Ga.

The Negro Theater--Its Place in America

By ABRAM HILL

The Worker N.Y., N.Y.

The theater, in its fullest sense, is created from the lives of the people and expresses the very foundation upon which that life is built. Each nation and each people has a contribution to make to such a theatre of the people.

6-24-45

The theatre in America has developed from foreign influences a group of artists in the theatre, each with his own individual approach. phenomenal experiments in lighting and architecture are the resulting factors gaining the greatest recognition in the world theatre.

With the average American mind instinctively opposed to centralization, it is probable that the collaborative threatre, which makes for a fusion of oneness, yet equality of emphasis for director, playwright, actor, designer et al, will be the great contribution our country will eventually make. It is natural that this approach, democratic in its very essence, should evolve from the world's greatest democracy.

In such a theatre which makes for the unification of the craftsman in the theatre rather than the one-man genius technique, will also include the participation of all Americans, both its majority and minority groups. The cultural stream of America, fed by these various racial springs, cannot ignore the bid of a Negro theatre.

DRAMATIC CONFLICT

It is realized that the life of the Negro in America has been filled with great emotional depth, full of conflict and complications, passing dramatically through more levels of life than any other race. However—for the most part the theatre has revealed the three hundred year transitional period through which the Negro has undergone in this country as a superstitious, spiritual-singing, frustrated misfit in a complex modern civilization.

This misfit, consistently drawn as the comical, lazy, ignorant, docile and not too bright character, reached his height in popularity during the heyday of the minstrel show. Though the latter has faded from the scene, so has the cork, but the spirit of the minstrel still dominates in parts written for Negroes. More than two-thirds of the 83 original plays received, read and rejected by the American Negro Theatre were flavored with minstrel yeasting.

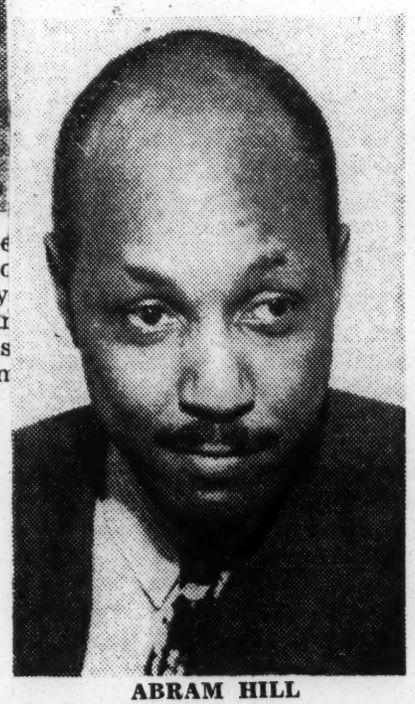
6-24-45

MINORITY PROBLEMS

There is a need in the theatre for expressing in terms of entertainment the refined and disciplined emotional experience of America's "problem minority," who are, despite all odds, fitting in and contributing to the progress of American civilization. Through the honest portrayal of Negro life and character, the American Negro Theatre not only seeks to avoid the distorted patterns of the status quo, but hopes to relegate them into oblivion.

The place of the Negro theatre in America varies according to the section of the country where that theatre functions. 'Tis needless to say that racial segregation and cultural isolation has stifled many attempts out of existence. In the annual report of the National

SPEECH DELIVERED BY ABRAM HILL, Director, American Negro Theater, at Theater Panel, Conference of the Arts, Sciences and Professions in the Post-war World.



ABRAM HILL

Theatre Conference last fall none of the hundreds of community theatres associated with the organization revealed the fact that Negroes were allowed full participation in their theatres. The majority used white actors in black makeup when Negro characters needed. This also is true of threatre groups above the Mason-Dixon Line.!

To answer such a broad question, I can only refer to the American Negro Theatre. For here, and as its director, all the ideas I can think of on the subject are inherent in that organization along with those of my associates. The overall purpose of the American Negro Theatre is to revolutionize Negro participation in the theatre—to swiftly change the course which has been followed till this day—to project men and women on the stage as men and women, rather than the exotic distortions which are well rooted in the soil of America.

In following such a course, experiments of all kinds are being used. Eventually we will evolve a technique of our own which derives from a basic and honest quality inherent in our race. In so doing, we will as we have in the past enlist the participation of all races. This results in a remarkable cultural exchange and makes for the creation of an integrated theatre —a people's theatre.

If we succeed in bringing about this transition, there will be both artistic and financial benefits to be derived by all concerned. In recasting the Negro theatre it may be necessary to recast the audience with a new audience that wants honesty rather than distortion, an audience wanting perfectionism rather than professionalism.

Dunham Dance Studios Open

Memphis World

ICNU

NEW YORK—(ANP)—Katherine Dunham, world-famous dancer, has just recently opened her new school of dance in the old headquarters of the renown George White at 220 W. 43rd street in the heart of Broadway. Here, in beautiful new studies designed and decorated by George Bergal, Miss Dunham ,assisted by a staff of talented teachers, presents a full curriculum in dance for both adults and children .

Students can enroll at any time during the year for classes in the Dunham technique, percussion-use of primitive instruments, native folk dances, ballet, tap dancing, eukinetics, body training for actors, etc.

FINE STAFF

Miss Dunham's staff includes Todd Bolender, well-known ballet dancer and choregrapher who has appeared with the American ballet both in the United States and South America. His recent ballet, Comedia Baletica, which he choregraphed for the Balle Russe Monte Carlo, earned high praise from critics as well as audiences. Another staff member and supervisor of the school is Miss Spvilla Fort, a graduate of Cornish School of Art, Music and Drama who instructed her own company in Los Angeles. She has performed with the Repertory playhouse in Seattle as well as with Dunham.

Another prominent staff member is Miss Marie Bryant, now appearing in 'Are You With It,' latest Broadway musical hit, and formerly with Duke Ellington. Miss Eleanor Guy, Dunham's permanent company. school secretary did concert work with Hans Weiner of Boston and appeared before the Boston Symphony there.

12-28-43

Other teachers are Lucille Ellis Henri Augustin and Lenwood Morris, all prominent members of Miss

88a-1945

Dramatic

Switching To Dramatic Career

N.Y. Amsterdam News

LOVEY LANE ONE OF THE FOREMOST EXOTIC DANCERS, who has danced in the topnotch theatres and night clubs in the country and whose beauty has exacted oooohs and aaaahs from thousands of exciting eyes, has turned her attention towards the stage and screen. Having had one stint in movies when she appeared opposite Henry Armstrong in "Keep Punching", Lovey ought to do alright behind the footlights. Don't you think? (P. S.—G. I.'s may clip photo for pin up).

Arthur Rich Is The New 'Emperor Jones'

N.Y. Amsterdam News

Appearing at the Cherry Lane Theatre in the Village on Tuesday night, January 16, in the title role of Hedgerow Theatre's production of Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor—Jones" is Arthur Rich, chauffeur, valet, and handy man from Media, Pa. The now famous role, which has been played by such actors as Paul Robeson, Rex Ingram, Charles Gilpin and Wayland Rudd, is not new to Rich who has played the role opposite Jasper Deeter's Smithers in the Hedgerow repertory since 1931—a total of over 200 performances. It will be remembered that Charles Gilpin and Jasper Deeter originally created the respective roles in the world premier of the play by the Provincetown Players in 1920.

Rich, now aged 50, was born and schooled at Cheney, Pa., the son of a chef at Philadelphia's fashionable Cheltenham Military Academy, and was named for Arthur Durnell, West Chester chorister. When World War I came along Rich left his position as valet and enlisted in the 325th Field Signal Battalion, the first Negro signal corps in the history o fthe United States Army, and as a sergeant served nine months overseas, going into action in the Argonne Forest. 1-13-45

Returning from the war Rich took the position in the home of a prominent Philadelphia attorney which he now holds. He married soon afterward and has raised a family of four children. Julie, the eldest is a second lieutenant in the WAC, having graduated from Morgan College in Baltimore and taken post graduate work at Bryn Mawr College and Penndle Hill. Mary, the next oldest, also joined the WAC after completing her schooling at Media High School where Arthur Jr., is at present a football player and is awaiting his call from the draft board. Jordan, the youngest, is ten and a student at the Media public school.

In 1931 Rich joined Hedgerow Theatre as a part-time member. Since then, besides his role of Emperor Jones, he has played Enos in "No 'Count Boy", Uncle January in "The Man Who Died at Twelve O'clock", and Lije Huneycutt in "In Abraham's Bosom", all by Paul Green. As yet unfulfilled are his ambitions to play "Othello" and O'Neill's "Hairy Ape" with an all-Negro cast.

Rich is a member of Fellowship House, a Friends' inter-racial group, and is chairman of the inter-racial playground in his own community. Among his friends and acquaintances are such outstanding artists as Paul Robeson, actor and singer; Dorothy Maynard, opera singer; Abbie Mitchell, actress and concert singer; Langsten Hughes, writer, and Josh White, blues and folk singer.

"The Emperor—Jones" will be played again this week on Wednesday, January 17 and Thursday, January 18. On Friday night, January 19, the Hedgerow Company will present for the first time in New York "Tomorrow's Yesterday" by Jack Kinnard, with Catherine Rieser and Jasper Deeter in leading roles. "Thunder on the Left", Jean Ferguson Black's adaptation of the Morley novel, will be played on Sunday, January 21, and Monday, January 22, and "Quintin Quintana" by the Mexican poet and playwright, Ramon Naya, on Tuesday, January 23, and Wednesday, January 24. The Hedgerow engagement at the Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce Street, will end on Sunday night, February 11.

Has Role in 'Hasty Heart

Afro-American 88a

EARL JONES, lone colored actor in the Lindsay-Hasty Heart," which opened at New York's Hudson Theatre 1-4-45 run in Baltimore.

Harriet Went to Siam.

Chicago Tribune—Ill.

Harriet Beecher Stowe lives again in Helen Hayes' performance of "Harriet" long after little is remembered of her book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," other than that it tore one nation in two and was translated into the languages of 37 others, ranging from Chinese to Welsh. Did you know, for instance, that a member of the harem of the king of Siam in the 1860s became so inspired by this book that she changed her name, Hidden Perfume or Lady Son Klin, to Son Klin Harriet Beecher Stowe? 1-13-45

Details of this fascinating bit of history are told in Margaret Landon's current best seller, "Anna and the King of Siam." Anna was Anna Leonowens, an English governess in the king's palace. It was she who first passed around at court an old and battered copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Lady Son Klin became so interested that she began to translate the story into Siamese. As her work progressed, her veneration for Mrs. Stowe grew. Finally one day she invited Miss Leonowens to a mysterious dinner. After a sumptuous feast, all adjourned to the garden, where Lady Son Klin's 132 slaves knelt in rows. Speaking from her veranda, she told them: 1-13-45

"I am wishful to be good like Harriet Beecher Stowe. I want never to buy human bodies again, but only to let go free once and for all. So from this moment I have no more slaves, but hired servants. I give freedom to all of you who have served me, to go or stay with me as you wish. . . ."

Lady Son Klin was not the only convert. The king's son, Prince Chulalongkorn, declared, "If I live to reign over Siam, I shall reign over a free and not an enslaved nation." He remained true to his word. His proclamation emancipating the slaves of Siam was his first act as king on Jan. 1, 1872.

Miss Leonowens by that time had gone to America to live, meeting Longfellow, Holmes, Emerson, and even Mrs. Stowe. Soon an agitated letter came to her: 1-13-45

"My dear friend and teacher. My goodness gracious. You will not know us any more, we are all so changed, a freedomed people; some of the free not like to leave their master and mistress so they weep for gladness, but most run off like wild deer from shotgun and are for joy like one mad.

"Me and my two sisters are too happy we fear almost to say how happy for fear perhaps it will all vanish. Your loving pupil, Son Klin Harriet Beecher Stowe."

'CARMEN' CLOSES BROADWAY RUN

1-19-45

Pittsburgh Courier—Pg. 2-10-45

NEW YORK—Billy Rose's successful production, "Carmen Jones," closed at the Broadway Theatre on Feb. 10.

The production opened here in December of 1943 with a cast of more than 100, and will have played a total of 502 performances. Based on Bizet's "Carmen," the musical contains a new version of the libretto, by Oscar Hammerstein II, who wrote new lyrics.

After some recasting, plans are under way for an opening production at the Biltmore Theater in Los Angeles on June 4 for an engagement of four weeks. This will be the beginning of a cross-country tour that is to last a year and a half. With the exception of Washington and Baltimore, practically every major city in the country will witness the show.

Brave New World

New Masses 2-13-45

"THE TEMPEST," at the Alvin Theater, is gay, vibrant and beautiful, and Miss Webster has employed the whole recipe of theater: dialogue, pantomime, dance, architecture and painting, music and lighting, in marvelous balance.

Since *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's last important creation, it has been easy to regard it in the nature of a last good-humored bow. It is as if Shakespeare, in his mature wisdom, had foresworn revenge for wrongs and abuses and now wished only for their correction in simple justice. Though his stage holds more fools and knaves than philosophers, still he can say, "How beauteous mankind is! Oh, brave new world that has such people in it." 2-13-45

Arnold Moss as Prospero is so close to the popular portrait of the poet that farewell. I must confess that I approached the performance with misgivings. Caliban forgot to think of him as anything but a he gives the illusion of the living presence of Shakespeare. The resemblance is so striking that in the epilogue it seems not written with any designation of ruggedness, so much Prospero as Shakespeare himself, but the part had never been played whose color was a matter of indifference. who disperses the spirits, monsters and by a Negro. I could not but wonder how Some day we should see a black Ariel, a pageantry and in austere dignity bids us seemly it would be for a member of black Prospero and a white Caliban—

though that may be a long time after the Hitlers and the Bilbos are swept into the dustbin of history. 2-13-45

I think that what most made me lose awareness of Caliban's color is that so much of the time he is in the company of the two clowns. Miss Webster's genius for showmanship and casting is shown in making a team of Lee and the two famous Czech comedians, George Voscovek (as the jester), and Jan Werich (as Stephano, the butler). The choice of the dancer, Vera Zorina (as Ariel), was, however, more showmanship than genius. Not that she fails Ariel completely. She is graceful and often speaks her lines well, but is physically too large for the mercurial sprite—and since she does not actually dance, there is little virtue in her being a dancer.

Francis Heflin plays Prospero's daughter with such charm of voice and manner that what seemed vapid in the lines becomes delicate and beguiling. Even the part of Ferdinand, her lover, is so played by Vito Christi as to seem naive only by reason of his youthfulness. Other good performances are those by Berry Kroeger as the brother who ousted Prospero from the dukedom of Milan and by Eugene Stuckman as Sebastian, the brother of the King of Naples whom he seeks to supplant by a small slitting of the throat. Philip Huston is a sightly King of Naples. Gonzalo, his loyal minister, is played by Paul Leyssac in an amusing style that makes him out to be part wise, part simple, both a good servitor and an anarchist: the embodiment of adjustments.

The most impressive performance, however, is that of Arnold Moss as Prospero. Moss has the commanding presence for the part, which calls for a combination of magic and human wisdom. He raises his wand and the tempest blows, every man is in jeopardy and yet every man is safe. When as Prospero he threatens Ariel or Caliban, it is in the capacity of the father. And when he decides to break his magic wand, we share his conviction that he breaks nothing, for reason and experience are all the magic he will need. 2-13-45

It should be added that the settings, costumings, lighting and David Diamond's music all contributed to a notable production.

BETWEEN OURSELVES

New Masses

UNITY, or the expression of a common denominator of belief and action, was beautifully demonstrated at the NEW MASSES Cultural Awards Dinner at the Hotel Commodore on January 22. Men and women of varying political beliefs and crafts came together to enunciate a common hope in the future cultural fullness of our country. There were Daniel Fitzpatrick, cartoonist, of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch;* Carl Van Doren, literary critic, teacher, historiographer; F. O. Matthiessen, of Harvard, distinguished scholar and critic, author of such classics as *The American Renaissance* and *Henry James: The Major Phase;* Max Weber, painter; Howard Fast, the titles of whose books need no recounting for NEW MASSES readers; Bill Gropper; Quentin Reynolds, *Collier's* foreign correspondent; and Norman Corwin, of radio fame. Others unable to accept an award in person sent either proxies or messages, asking to be regarded as part of the festivities. These included Paul Robeson, who is doing *Othello* for West Coast audiences; Fredric March, who was represented by his wife, Florence Eldridge; Lillian Hellman, en route from the Soviet Union, whose standin was Herman Shumlin, producer of Miss Hellman's plays; Lena Horne, who was proxied by Fredi Washington, one of the first serious Negro actresses ever to appear in films; and screenwriters John Howard Lawson and Lamar Trotti, who were unable to leave their work just now. Robert Rossen, a Hollywood colleague, accepted their awards. The last-named was chairman of the evening, and NEW MASSES hereby thanks him for a demanding job well done. Mr. Rossen, incidentally, is not only a leading screen writer, having authored some ten screenplays—including *Edge of Darkness* and the forthcoming *Walk in the Sun*—but was also instrumental in organizing the Writers Congress in Los Angeles in the fall of 1943, and the Hollywood Writers Mobilization, which he served as its first president. One of the most moving incidents of the program was the reading by Mrs. Stephen Vincent Benet of a little-known poem of her late husband's called "If This Should Change." This reading, serving as an acceptance speech for a posthumous award for poetry, expressed, perhaps as well as any comment, the purpose of the affair. 2-6-45

Thanks also go to Edward Chodorov, author of the play *Decision,* who told the audience of the pioneer role of NEW MASSES during that part of the evening devoted to the collection.

Announcement of the dinner brought the customary squealing and scurrying from Frederick Woltdmann of the New York *World-Telegram* (some day I'm going to force myself to look at his name long enough to learn how to spell it), but he terrorized no one into retreating.

Coincident with the NM dinner at the Commodore was one under the auspices of the New York State Publishers Association. Hotel employes greeted guests coming off the elevator with, "NEW MASSES to the right, publishers to the left." Chief speaker for the newsmen was Rep. Clare Booth Luce, perfume-schpritzer for the Republican old guard. All evening long, the publishers' men, trained presumably to track a shadow to its lair, kept confusing their dinner with ours. One group ate its way right through the NM menu without discovering its error. When the speeches came along they listened with baffled expressions. Said one of them finally to his pals, "These speeches are interesting, but don't you think they're a little peculiar?" They finally tumbled to why NEW MASSES, of all the publications, was being constantly mentioned. 2-6-45

One of the awards, not advertised in advance, was a surprise—that to editor Joseph North for journalism. The dinner, incidentally, was notable also as a sort of send-off party for North, who is now on his way to London to report on the International Trade Union Congress.

2-6-45

THE collection, which came to $7,100 and not to $4,000 as advertised by the Hearst *Journal-American* with its customary flair for irresponsible reporting, marks the beginning of our yearly fund drive, of which you will undoubtedly hear more later.

Derby And Frenchy Rate Tops In Nation's Tapology

Pittsburgh Courier, — Penn.
2-10-45

NEW YORK—Since their first appearance together three years ago at Club Harlem, Atlantic City, the dance duo of Derby Wilson and Frenchie has been gathering a momentum of headlines and top billings. This team is, without reservations, talented and clever. Their routines are original, smoothly woven together and executed with a finesse that ranks them in the uppermost strata of dance combos. These executioners of tap terpsichore are currently starring in Betty Taylor's new revue, 'Swingeroo," at Detroit's Club 666.

Derby Wilson, the boy member of the team, has been dancing for fifteen years. A young dancer around Harlem, he started "beating the boards" at the Hoofer's Club, the club from whence Bill Robinson, Tip, Tap and Toe, and many other dancing stars of color started on the road to fame. Possessed of ambition and a strong will to succeed, Derby kept on dancing until in 1930 he became one-half of an act with Bill Bailey as his partner. Billed as "Derby and Billy," this team was together for five successful years and the highlight of this merger took place in 1933 when this "big time" act toured Europe for six months in a featured spot with Duke Ellington and his orchestra.

Three years ago Derby saw Frenchie Bascomb dancing in the chorus line at the Apollo Theatre in New York City. In her he saw the makings of a good dancer and the potentialities and qualities for the other half of a dance team he had in mind, a dance team that would be different and a complete departure from anything he ever had done. 2-10-45

So this boy and this girl became known as "Derby and Frenchie." They have come a long way from their starting point in Atlantic City and today indications are that "this is only the beginning" of the real success that will be theirs in the very near future.

In April they will join Jimmy Dorsey as headliners in his road show. This leader of one of the day's most outstanding name bands thinks so much of Derby and Frenchie that he will be their personal representative.

If the master of the dancing feet, Bojangles Robinson, predicted that Derby would be the second Bojangles, then there is no doubt whatever that Derby and Frenchie are good. They are extraordinary.

IN CAST OF FOUR

The New York Times

Elwood Smith, who will appear in the American Negro Theatre's first presentation of the season, "Home Is the Hunter," opening tonight. 12-20-45

MRS. ROOSEVELT LIKES STAGE PLAY OF "STRANGE FRUIT"

The St. Louis Argus
Saint Louis, Mo.

NEW YORK (CNS) — Though professing herself no theatre critic, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt judged the play "Strange Fruit" by her own standards, and discovered it rated high. 12-21-45

In her syndicated column dated Dec. 11, she says "I had been told that the book was better than the play. That may be true, but nevertheless there are strong, tense scenes in the play. It will be a long time before I forget the ones between Dr. Sans and Tom Harris, the kindly courageous Southerner who tries successfully to stop the lynching. It (the play) isn't pleasant drama but neither are life and some conditions in our country."

Mrs. Roosevelt pays tribute to heroine Jane White who "plays her part with restraint and beauty."

Should the Negro Actor Be Limited to Negro Roles

The Worker N.Y.N.Y. 2-25-45

The position of the Negro artist in the theater has improved more significantly than is generally realized, even though the victory over Jimcrow on the stage is far from complete. The past two or three seasons have witnessed several important departures from a prejudice-encrusted tradition.

The outstanding examples include: 2-25-45

Robeson's Othello, a commercial as well as artistic success, smashing all records for consecutive performances of a Shakespearean play, and still continuing on a triumphant road tour.

The clause in Paul Robeson's contract with the Theater Guild which bars appearances of Othello before audiences from which Negroes have been excluded or in which they are segregated.

The extraordinary hit registered by two all-Negro casts in such dissimilar productions as Carmen Jones and Anna Lucasta.

The firm Negro-white unity portrayed in such dramas as Decision and Men to the Sea.

The roles of Hubert Dilworth, Richard Huey, and Dooley Wilson in Bloomer Girl; Canada Lee in The Tempest; Earl Jones in The Hasty Heart.

The integrated treatment of Negro figures as part of the New York background in On the Town.

TOWARD DEMOCRACY

These examples—and several others—suggest the variety of ways in which the theatre today is moving toward a fully democratic treatment of the Negro artist and the Negro theme. And while this progress is still too slow and inconsistent, there is no doubt that the stage is far ahead of the movies in this respect. 2-25-45

But one basic challenge remains to be met, and that is the right of the Negro actor to perform in any part, Negro or white.

There is no artistic reason why a Negro artist should not perform Lear as well as Othello. To the extent that the Negro actor continues to be barred from a role merely on the basis of color, he is the victim of prejudice.

As theatre columnist Joe Bostic writes in a recent issue of The People's Voice, the theatre industry may do well to explore in the very near future the following question: "Why can't people of any group portray the people of any other group, or to put it another way, since the theatre is make believe anyway, people should be able to portray any roles.

"This would seem to open a whole new vista for consideration. Up until the present it has more or less been considered an implied truism that Negro actors are not expected to—or perhaps can't—portray other groups on the Broadway stage."

PAST TESTIMONY

The idea that a Negro actor may perform effectively as a white character will no doubt startle many theatregoers.

As a matter of fact, the last century was ahead of us in this respect. **The American-born Negro tragedian Ira Aldridge played Othello without makeup; and he also performed Lear made up as a white. And some observers felt that, magnificent as he was in the first role, he was even better in the second.**

Let me cite the intelligent testimony of the French novelist Theophile Gautier, who saw Aldridge do his Shakespearean parts in St. Petersburg. I quote from his book, A Winter in Russia, published here in 1875. 2-25-45

"During my sojourn in the City of the Czars," Gautier recalls, "a celebrated American Negro actor chanced to be there for a time, Ira Aldridge by name. He was the lion of St. Petersburg, and it was necessary to go some days beforehand to obtain a good seat at one of his performances. He played Othello first, and his origin exempted him from all need of artificial coloring—liquorice-juice, or coffee-grounds or sleeves of chocolate-covered net . . . his appearance on the scene was magnificent; it was Othello himself as Shakespeare created him. . . ."

Then Gautier went on to make this interesting point:

"The repertoire of a Negro actor would seem to be limited to colored pieces; but, when you think of it, if a white comedian besmirches himself with bistre to play a black role, why should not a black comedian paint himself white to play a white role? It has been done.

"Ira Aldridge, the following week played King Lear, and all requisite illusion was perfectly produced. A flesh-colored skull - cap, whence hung some few locks of silvery hair, covered his wooly curls and came down to his eyebrows; a wax addition was made to his own flat nose and a thin coat of paint covered his cheeks. For the rest, a great white beard concealed the lower part ofhis face, and fell upon his breast: the transformation was complete: Cordelia never could have suspected that her father was a black man! . . .

"The King Lear was a better performance than the Othello, in my judgment. In the former he acted his part, in the latter he was simply himself. . . . One thing in the performance was remarkable, showing how perfect was the actor's mastery over himself; although a man of robust strength and in the flower of his age, Ira Aldridge never, through all the evening, allowed one youthful motion to escape him; voice, step, and gesture, all were those of extreme old age."

REEXAMINE PREJUDICES

2-25-45

The great success of Aldridge in Othello has been duplicated in our own day. It remains for a contemporary Aldridge to be enabled to duplicate his success in Lear and in other "white roles."

It may be argued that the casting of Canada Lee as Caliban is a noteworthy step in this direction. I am inclined to doubt it. For Caliban, whatever else may be said for or against him, is a hag-born monster that does not represent man, either white or black.

I am not suggesting that the casting of Negro players in "white" roles is the primary need of the anti-Jimcrow theatre today. But I do feel that the American theatre must undertake at once to reexamine its prejudiced assumption that such casting is impossible in principle. For until this assumption is shattered, the Negro will not be treated fully as an artist whose roles are determined by his own scope and versatility rather than by the color of his skin.

Mrs. Dooley Wilson in from the Coast to join her husband who's appearing in "Bloomer Girl." Art Tatum, Benny Morton's outfit and Louermell Morgan's Trio at the Down Beat. Rubber Legs Williams wanting to go overseas.

Frederick O'Neal to Appear In New Play of Negro Life

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

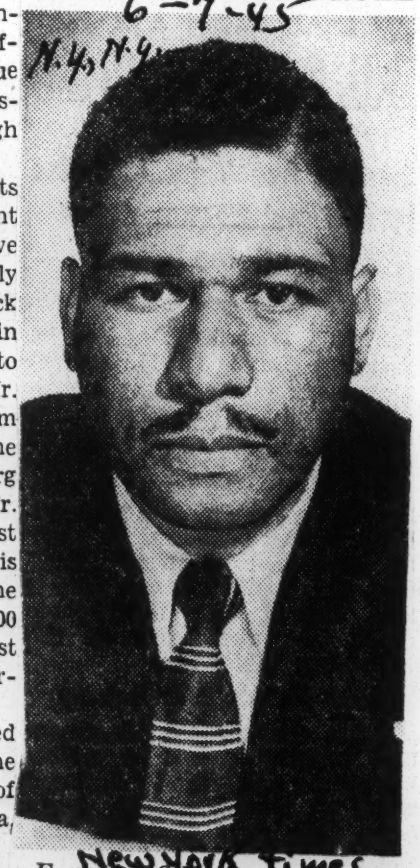
The American Negro Theatre announces its third and final production of the season **Henri Christophe** which will open at the Library Theatre, 103 W. 135 St. on Wednesday evening, June 6 at 8:45 after a series of preview performances beginning on May 30. Following the official performances will continue on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through June 30. 5-21-45

As a rule, ANT usually runs its shows for a minimum of eight weeks. **Henri Christophe** will have a limited run and will definitely close on June 30 because Frederick O'Neal, who enacts the title role in the play, is scheduled to return to the cast of **Anna Lucasta.** Mr. O'Neal is on leave of absence from the Broadway hit show through the courtesy of Producer John Wildberg who released him in order for Mr. O'Neal to appear in ANT's latest offering. It is recalled that O'Neal is one of the two winners of the Charles Derwent cash prize of $500 for having given one of the best supporting performances of the current Broadway season.

Henri Christopher is being staged by J. Newton Hill, chairman of the English and Drama departments of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.

PORTRAYS TITLE ROLE

6-7-45 N.Y. N.Y.



New York Times

Frederick O'Neal, who is appearing in the tryout of "Henri Christophe," a chapter of Haitian history, which had its Harlem premiere last night. Mr. O'Neal came to the fore in "Anna Lucasta." His work in that play brought him one of Clarence Derwent's $500 prizes for the best acting in a supporting role.

Negro Theatre Plans Its 2nd Production

The Worker N.Y., N.Y. 3-25-45

The American Negro Theater announces its second production of the season, "Garden of Time," an interpretation by Owen Dodson of the Greek myth of Medea and Jason and the Golden Fleece. The presentation will open at the 135th St. Library Theatre, Wednesday evening, March 7 and continue every Wednesday through Saturday evenings for the following six weeks.

Abbie Mitchel Shows 'Em How To Act Now

Chicago Defender 6-2-45

ATLANTA, Ga. — Drama students at Atlanta university should be plenty "hep" to the jive upon graduation, for spending her third season with the Summer Theatre will be Miss Abbie Mitchell, noted actress and dramatic soprano. Several years ago, Miss Mitchell played on Broadway with Tallulah Bankhead in "The Little Foxes" and with Helen Hayes in "Coquette." For three years she taught voice at Tuskegee institute and assisted with dramatics. During the American Negro Exposition in Chicago, she was technical adviser for the production "Cavalcade of the Negro Theatre" and played the role of Abbie Mitchell. Chicago, Ill.

Itch To Win Lands Man, Wife In Broadway Chips

New York Amsterdam News

New York, N.Y.

Lunt-Fontaine Counterpart Emerging In Team of Alice and Alvin Childress

5-5-45

By ABE HILL

Full-blooded exuberance is echoing throughout theatrical circles over the sudden rise to prominence of Alice and Alvin Childress, man and wife acting team who were comparatively unknown actors a year ago and today, to say the least, are being called the Negro Lynn Fontaine-Alfred Lunt, thus being favorably compared with the foremost acting combo on the English speaking stage.

Though recognized as pivotal personalities among the vanguard of protagonists for the new Negro theatre, Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Childress, like a score of other players who recently hit the jack-pot as actors, had the itch to win but not the opportunity. Their ultimate triumph is a singular and significant accomplishment. Besides their natural dramatic endowment, persistent effort, hard study, patience, sacrifice, unyeilding faith and courage they had to face the nemisis of the Negro actor — a light complexion. Even this failed to daunt their determination to succeed.

ALVIN CHILDRESS

Color Against Them

Producers consistantly admired their talents but rejected them on the grounds that they preferred "well done Negroes" in casting their shows. This happened to Alvin until the Federal Theatre assigned him the role of Pierre in "Haiti" a few years ago. As the pathetic Haitian courtier in "Haiti," Mr. Childress scored, creating an eventful acting job which won him standing among the best of our actors. Agents, producers and scouts raved, but their ravings failed to rally any Broadway acting jobs for Alvin.

Actress-wife Mrs. Childress continued to fret for her real break. Unlike her husband, she never even had the chance of appearing on Broadway as he did in "Brown Sugar" and "Two On An Island." The bulging box office hit, "Anna Lucasta," gave Alice her big chance last June. It was a double-barrell bonanza. Alvin won himself the neat role of the limping bar-keep, while his wife essayed the floozie, Blanche, the waterfront tart. They won their parts the hard way. For it was in the American Negro Theater basement workshop, where both had been members since the founding days of the group, that they competed and were assigned the same parts by Director Harry Wagstaff Gribble. 5-5-45

Alice Wins High Praise

Doubt still lurks among certain circles as to whether or not the team would have been assigned the parts if the show had gotten its start through the normal Broadway channels. Light complexions perhaps would again have stalked them.

Alice Childress's creation of Blanche still arouses four-star praise from the press and the public. The conservative N. Y. Times critic Lewis Nichols, said Alice's role of the floozie probably will be never again played to greater perfection than Mrs. Childress is now doing Husband Alvin's acting is rated unactorish and natural, sincere and unique. Both players, with unfailing honesty, deny that they have given their all in there respective roles. In other words, they feel they can give even more to their parts. Such comforting modesty. 5-5-45

Along with the sudden upsweep of Negro theatricals, big opportunities are ahead for the team. Alice is being offered a weekly salary of $500 by a producer for a forthcoming Broadway show. Countee Cullen is also trying to interest her in the title role of "St. Louis Woman." "Strange Fruit" as a play due in next season may be another possibility. Alvin, among the offers being made to him and with his talent for creating the inner spirit of stage characters, may win the $750 weekly role of "DeLawd" in the revival of "Green Pastures" next season. These are the sensational happenings to two players who went begging for acting jobs a year ago.

However, the players are concerned with their roles in "Anna Lucasta" presently. They have enacted them for nine months with their contracts being subject to renewal on June 1st. The important point is that Broadway has been cured of its color complex. Patrons pouring out of the Mansfield Theatre where the play is running have remarked: "I don't know whether she's Negro or not — but her acting is terrific."

Had Other Worries

The scarcity of Negro opportunity in the theatre, the diabolical color line within the Negro race and the all engulfing almost fanatical zeal for the theatre weren't the only stumbling blocks that hampered the success of the Childresses. They had the added burden of their parents objections against a career on the stage. Missippippi-born Alvin, after graduating from Rust College in 1931, came to New York as a protege of Mrs. Vanzella Jones, well known director from Pittsburg, Pa. His mother, a Federal Supervisor in the State of Missippippi, finally gave in to Alvin's stage yearnings despite his lack of success in New York. With Alice, it was a much harder road. 5-5-45

Born in Charlestown, S. C. and migrating with her mother to New York at the age of five, Alice's childhood was partly spent with her mother in New York and her father in St. Louis, Mo. She is a cousin of the millionaire W. F. Herndon family, the owners of the huge Atlanta Life Insurance Company. When Papa Childress, who managed the St. Louis office of the insurance company, cut her off from his share of the Herndon fortune because she wanted a stage career, Alice stiffened her spine and gave up quite a neat sum of "kale." As if this wasn't bad enough, when Alice rang the bell on Broadway last August as an actress, thus proving the stage is where she belonged, her father died in St. Louis two months before! (The estate is still unsettled.) 5-5-45

Love At First Sight

Love for each other and a love for the stage brought Alice and Alvin together. In 1933, they met when they joined the Urban League Players. It was love on the stage at first sight. They were married soon after meeting. Via the Urban League Players, Vanzella Jones' Players, private tutors and four years with the ANT, the team has arrived with a green light future.

Their success may be an inspiration to aspiring stage enthusiasts. Most people are stimulated by success stories, especially when they are tough ones. But this success cuts absolutely no ice with little Jean Childress, the couple's 9-year-old daughter. Though Jean has inherited thet combined acting talent of her parents, she has not inherited their love for it. She can act, imitate, mimic in the manner of the best Hollywood child prodigies, but just for fun — says Jean and adds:

"Getting ahead as an actor is too tough. Sometimes they miss meals and I love to eat regularly."

P. S.: I think Jean is going to follow in the footsteps of her parents, the Lynn Fontaine and Alfred Lunt of the future.

"Christophe" Folds After 25 Performances

7-14-45

Journal & Guide

Norfolk, Va.

NEW YORK CITY —(ANP)— The American Negro theatre production "Henri Christophe" folded recently after its 25th performance on Broadway. Frederick O'Neal of the American Negro theatre group had the lead. He will return to "Anna Lucasta" from which he was borrowed.

During O'Neal's absence from the Lucasta success, Warren Coleman, famous for his portrayal of the villian of "Crown" in "Porgy and Bess" substituted with striking success. John Wildberg, producer of "Anna Lucasta" and "Porgy and Bess," had a 10-day option on "Henri Christophe" but failed to exercise it. 7-14-45

Mr. Wildberg who also was principal owner of "Memphis Bound" which closed recently and which starred Bill Robinson, has become known as a prospective backer of Negro shows since his phenomenal financial success with "Lucasta" and "Porgy and Bess."

NEGRO ACTORS FORM GUILD

New York Times

Repertory Company to Present 'Ladies in Retirement' Jan. 17-18

N.Y.C. N.Y.

The New York Players Guild, a Negro repertory company, has been formed to develop actors, it was announced yesterday. With Ruth Attaway serving as director, the first production will be "Ladies in Retirement," which will be presented at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall on Jan. 17 and 18. A graduate of the University of Illinois, Miss Attaway last acted on Broadway in "You Can't Take It With You." For two years she was on the staff of the American Red Cross in England as a club program director rand as a clubmobile captain. 12-24-45

In announcing the new group's objectives, Miss Attaway said: "We intend to contribute to the process already under way to free the Negro actor from the serious restrictions that have been imposed on him through racial type-casting and caricaturing. We believe that the Negro in the theatre, as in other arts, has yet to secure due recognition as a complete artist operating over the widest possible area."

Hilda Simms Hasn't Let Her Success As a Star Sweep Her Feet Off Ground

Daily Worker, New York, N.Y. 9-17-45

By BETH McHENRY

Hilda Simms, the beautiful star of **Anna Lucasta**, says she still is a little bit "star shy." She only now is beginning to feel at home among the "name" people of Broadway, she says.

But Hilda Simms could give plenty of "name" people lessons in how to be themselves—how to be a warm, responsible, very human being at the same time the critics, the theatre crowds and offers from Hollywood have proclaimed success to a new star.

We saw a moving example of this backstage of **Anna Lucasta** the other night when we went there to interview Miss Simms. There was a knock on her dressing-room door and a musician whom she did not know came to give her a message about a friend who needed a job. Miss Simms took the message and then asked the man if anything were wrong, he looked troubled. The musician told her, "I've just had news that my sister had died." She spoke to him in a comforting way and after a few moments came back to her dressing-room with real tears in her eyes. "Just think of the calibre of a man who in the midst of personal grief can still concern himself with the problem of a friend who needs a job," she said.

HER CRITERION

You had the feeling that Hilda Simms would do the same herself. She has a rich appreciation of people and she will make a comment of another person to the effect that "he really cares about people." Obviously that is the criterion of he judgment in friends.

Anna Lucasta had been on Broadway just a few days more than a year when we went to see Miss Simms. She still is breathless with the wonder of its success, pleased for much more than personal reasons. For in this play, she feels that another landmark for Negro artists has been achieved. She also feels that this particular year has marked great gains in the American theater. Plays with meaning have been accepted as theater fare for vast audiences instead of for the small groups who were the patrons of Little Theater movements. Such productions as **Decision, Common Ground, Othello, On The Town, Bloomer Girl** mean an upsurge in real art on Broadway, she feels certain. 9-17-45

Miss Simms, who came to Broadway from Minneapolis via a roundabout route—through Hampton Institute, Virginia, and the American Negro Theatre in New York—says the upsurge in theater is part of the whole democratic consciousness now growing rapidly in America.

"Our people fought a war, a just war against a terrible enemy," she said. "Not even artists can come out of such a war unthinking.

"The artist has a responsibility he has to recognize. He has got to be more than just a person, he has got to help lead people into a better life." 9-17-45

Miss Simms cited Paul Robeson as the supreme example of such an artist. She is proud of having taken part in the election campaign last year and expects to do everything possible to help reelect Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. to the City Council this year.

"He's a good man," she said, "he has my vote."

As for herself and the future, Hilda Simms means to keep on studying. She is happy in her success, but feels that she has far to go in the direction of perfecting her art. Her director, Harry Gribble, whom she pays tribute to as the one person responsible above others for putting her to work in a deeply serious way, told her he expected her to become a star overnight. But she didn't believe him. She says she still doesn't. She believes that great acting, like great music and writing, is natural talent plus tremendous work, plus maturing as a person.

As for Hollywood—she has had three offers already, but none of them has been acceptable. Hollywood, she says, is far behind Broadway in the courage to present Negro artists in something more than comic or pathetic roles. When a real offer, of a real part, comes from the film capital, Hilda Simms will consider it.

Meanwhile, there's **Anna Lucasta,** still running to capacity crowds.

HILDA SIMMS

Hilda Simms loves this play and the people in it and she says she leaves for the theater every night with the same degree of excitement as when it opened.

Journal & Guide
Norfolk, Va. 10-27-45

NEW "ANNA" IN BROADWAY PLAY—Miss Valeria Black recently stepped into the role on "Anna" in the play, Black recently stepped into the role of "Anna" in the play, Theatre in New York City. Hilda Simms, who played the role in the original production, has gone to Chicago to star in Company Number 1 of "Anna Lucasta." Miss Black is the pretty and talented actress who has understudied Miss Simms in the role. She played the lead role during Miss Simms' absence last summer because of illness. Miss Black has been on the stage since childhood, mostly as a dancer. She has played in such shows as "Black Birds," "Hot Mikado," "Born Happy," and "Carmen Jones."

Fred O'Neal Has Good Reason To Remember This Birthday

By ANN SEYMOUR

Anna Lucasta celebrates its first birthday on Aug. 30. One of the actors who played an important part in the success of that play is Frederick O'Neal. His story is an interesting one. He was born in Brookville, Mo., and received his elementary training there. When he was 14 he and his family moved to St. Louis. He claims he has always been interested in the theatre and must always have shown potentialities; for even as a small child of nine his principal would allow him to select his own plays to present on the school program.

O'Neal's father who was in the general merchandising business owned property and permitted Fred and his friends to stage shows in a big hall in their home.

The programs were sure to be a big hit for the admission fee was only 10 to 15 cents and the town had no other form of entertainment.

SIDEWALK ART

The promotion job the children did must have helped too, what with sidewalks, fences and the walls of houses and buildings to mark with chalk. Sidewalk art was not the only means of advertising the resourceful youngsters had at their disposal. They paraded the streets ringing bells, and displaying signs. Fred must have shown managerial talent even then, for it seems that he did most of the organization and planing for the shows. Immediately after leaving high school he worked for a wholesale drug house and later for the post office. He traveled through several not-too-distant cities like St. Paul, Chicago and others, for short periods over a two-year span. During this time he attended school for as long as his money lasted. When it ran out he would go back to work again.

This unsettled state of affairs ended with his return to St. Louis. He was offered and accepted the job of secretary of the Negro Business Men's League. The members visited churches in the interest of the League and in the promotion of Negro business in the neighborhood. The aim of the League was that Negroes should trade only with Negroes. Frederick felt that this was "wrong and that they were doing the same thing they were trying to break down. It didn't make sense." He wanted to organize along neighborhood lines. He felt that trading with people on the basis of color was inconsistent, but he knew that he could never convince the members of the League.

FREDERICK O'NEAL

He had been planning to come to New York for some time—since the days of the Aldridge Players which he had organized. In 1936 he footed his way to Gotham and the New Theatre School. He worked during the day and studied nights for two years on a scholarship at the school. Later he studied with Komarsezsky, Nadya Roumanoff, and Harry McLain.

He worked with such groups as the Rose McClendon Players, and Richard Huey's Players.

He felt, however, that he wasn't geting the all-around training that was necessary. He believed and still does, that a group should not be named for any individual, living or dead, because it is immediately localized and limited in its scope.

He was recalling his experiences with the Aldridge Players, named for the great Ira Aldridge, which he had organized in St. Louis in 1927, and one or two other church groups. He states that the members of the Aldridge group didn't care about the quality of the performances they gave as much as they did about giving performances.

MEETS ABE HILL

On the other hand he believes avidly in sound training. In line with this belief, he arranged for instructions for the group. After a few lessons the Players rebelled at spending so much time on "classroom work." Since he was in the minority he had to concede. However, since the quality of the players didn't improve the community withdrew its support and he left on a traveling tour.

When he met Abe Hill he discovered that he had found for the first time a true sympathizer. He and Abe drank coffee together and talked about the Negro and the theatre. And that's how the American Negro Theatre, affectionately referred to as the ANT, was born. He proudly states that since June 5, 1940, when the group was organized, it has never failed to give a scheduled performance.

IDEALIZES DOUGLASS

O'Neal idealizes Frederick Douglass for whom he was named. He feels strongly that men like Bilbo and Rankin should be impeached for spreading racial and religious hatreds. He says "it is more than a mere coincidence that Bilbo and Rankin both hail from Mississippi, the state that lays claim to the highest illiteracy rate and the lowest public school standards in the nation, as well as other unenviable records." He adds:. "We have reached a new low and a searching investigation should be made to determine how such low types get into our highest law-making bodies. They should be impeached."

O'Neal is married to Charlotte Hainey, and lives in Harlem. He loves baseball but doesn't find time to get out to see or play it—even.

88a-1945

Elwood Smith (left) plays a fascist-minded war vet, with Clarice Taylor as his wife and Maxwell Glanville as a union leader in *Home Is the Hunter,* which the American Negro Theater will present tomorrow evening at its new headquarters, 15 W. 126th St.

BROADWAY REPORT:

Reprinted from Yesterday's Late Edition

By SEYMOUR PECK

'Home Is the Hunter'

The returning soldier, in most plays and films, is a young man who means to see that the better world he fought for becomes a reality. But *Home Is the Hunter,* which the American Negro Theater will present Thursday evening, will confront audiences with another fellow entirely—the one who "went abroad to fight Fascism and got converted to it."

Author Samuel M. Kootz doesn't think his man is a rarity among servicemen coming home. "He came to admire Fascism," Kootz says, "because he would like to exercise such power himself, because he would like to enjoy the ruthless, brutal control Fascism had over its subjects." Such development is not merely an out-growth of the war, Kootz adds. "Naturally the seeds must have been there."

An American industrial town, with labor and reconversion problems, is the setting Kootz has chosen for *Home Is the Hunter,* which is his first play. Like *Anna Lucasta,* this play was not written with a Negro cast in mind, but can serve the talents of white or Negro actors. This circumstance pleases the American Negro Theater. "No 'Negro twists,'" Elwood Smith, who portrays the soldier, says of *Home Is the Hunter.* "All in the good fight to prove that Negroes are like any other people—no better, no worse, and no different."

Home Is the Hunter is the first play of the American Negro Theater's current season, and the first to be presented in its new, larger quarters at 15 W. 126th St. ANT is glad to be out of the small, cramped basement library it used to work in on W. 135th St. Now it is looking forward to the time when it will have its own building, housing theaters and workshops and classrooms, when it can be a greater force in Harlem community life.

It is looking forward, too, to the time when members of its company will not have to rely on outside jobs for support. Meanwhile, content that they are working for a growing theater, young people like Elwood Smith and leading lady Clarice Taylor have other jobs and spend their evenings at ANT headquarters. Smith, who sang at Cafe Society Downtown for nine months last season, is now at Small's night club. And Miss Taylor goes downtown after each performance to work from midnight to 8:30 a.m. as a postal clerk at 90 Church St. post office. Director Abram Hill is well-known as drama critic of the *Amsterdam News.*

Home Is the Hunter will be given Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings each week. Subscriptions, priced at $1.25 and $1, may be obtained from the ANT, 15 W. 126th St. (SA 2-7783).

Home Is the Hunter

'Othello' Makes Theatre History, Opens New Stage Perspectives

The Worker 5-27-45

A brilliant chapter in American theater history has been added by Margaret Webster's production of **Othello**, starring Paul Robeson, Jose Ferrer and Uta Hagen. **Othello** has just returned to New York's City Center for a limited engagement following a sensational tour across the country.

The story is enormously impressive simply in terms of figures. The original run of 296 performances at the Shubert Theatre was the longest in the history of Shakespearean drama. In addition, 291 performances were given on tour, making a grand total, up to May 19, of 587. The transcontinental tour covered 46 cities in 17 states and four Canadian provinces. The itinerary covered 14,310 railroad miles and traversed 33 states and the entire width of the Dominion of Canada.

5-27-45

AND this Shakespearean production, which must have looked like a financial risk to many a Broadway "realist" before its opening, has grossed, on its road tour alone, $967,000, a figure that will pass the million dollar mark during its final weeks in New York!

In every city **Othello** played to capacity audiences, frequently in large auditoriums seating as many as five and six thousand people. It was enthusiastically acclaimed everywhere, from Saginaw, Mich., to Boulder, Colo., from Worcester, Mass., to Tacoma, Wash.

NEW PERSPECTIVES

This is a phenomenon for theater people to study and digest. It shatters many a myth, and it raises new perspectives for the American stage.

5-27-45

To begin with, the **Othello** production should give pause to those who have always defined American taste in terms of the box office. For years we have heard producers of vulgar claptrap argue that they were merely giving the public what it wanted. They could not "afford" to give the people art for the people patronized only the pulps.

The box office argument should work both ways—and the ledgers show that Shakespeare can smash long-standing house records.

Paul Robeson as Othello and Uta Hagen as Desdemona in Margaret Webster's production of the great Shakespearian play now at New York's City Center.

But it is, of course, a certain kind of Shakespeare. The fact is that previous **Othellos** were flops on the American stage. This tragedy has always been considered "good library" but a dud in the theater.

5-27-45

FAITHFUL INTERPRETATION

The success of this particular production is largely due to the fact that it is the most faithful interpretation of **Othello** that our stage has ever seen. That is to say, it did not evade Shakespeare's clear intention to make the issue of **Othello's** color a central part of the conflict.

On the contrary, by casting Paul Robeson as the protagonist, Margaret Webster dealt squarely with the crux of the tragedy and at the same time brought back to the stage one of the really great artists of our time. For the first time since the days of Ira Aldridge, the Negro tragedian who played the part on the European stage a century ago, the play appeared to assume a meaning and significance that thoughtful students of the text had always recognized. Moreover, Robeson was the perfect choice, aside from the color issue, for a part that demanded above all great nobility and dignity, a resonant and exceptional character.

Fears that modern audiences, like Desdemona's father, would not accept a colored **Othello** embracing a white woman have been proved unfounded. True, Robeson's itinerary did not include the South. But even for the supposedly enlightened North this production has been a persuasive challenge to bigotry and superstition. Indeed, theater history was made in this sense too. For Robeson's contract with the Theater Guild included a clause barring the performance of **Othello** in theaters that segregate the Negro audience.

5-27-45

HUNGER FOR THEATER

The success of **Othello** in so many cities also calls attention to the hunger for good theater in America today. This corresponds to the experience of the USO-Camp Shows touring the fronts. It was found that hundreds of thousands of troops who had never seen a drama outside of the movies, warmly received not only musicals but serious plays. The movies, while for a long time displacing the theater outside of the largest cities, have not filled the need served by the living play. The two media are different. Perhaps in the long run we shall come to realize that the movies have created a new and unprecedentedly large audience for the allied theater art.

It is a pleasure to welcome **Othello** back after its triumphant tour. The American theater has been enriched by this brilliantly acted and imaginatively directed production. Theatergoers will welcome more of the same from Margaret Webster and Paul Robeson.

Broadway Welcomes 'Othello'; Pinafore Gets Cold Shoulder

Birmingham News 6-4-45

BY JACK O'BRIAN
Associated Press Drama Editor

NEW YORK, June 4—Broadway's legitimate stage was busy this week if not very rewarding. The single worthy item was the revival at the City Center of "Othello." Good old reliable Bill Shakespeare saved the week, and is doing nicely under Margaret Webster's and the Theater Guild's direction. But two other British boys, Gilbert and Sullivan, are rolling over roughly in their grooves, I'm sure, after seeing what John Wildberg and a few of his hired hands did to their "H. M. S. Pinafore."

Jazzed up to the choking point, given a new name, "Memphis Bound," and performed by an all-Negro cast headed by Bill Robinson and Avon Long, this scalding version of "Pinafore" does none of its talented cast justice. Robinson was 67 last Wednesday. His birthday also happens by neat coincidence to be the 67th anniversary of the first performance of "H. M. S. Pinafore." It might have been a happy thing all around except for the show, which certainly does not merit any congratulations even though Robinson most assuredly does.

The most notable first night of the week was the return of "Othello" to the New York City Center for a brief run. It will give New Yorkers with short budgets a chance to see really excellent Shakespeare, for the Margaret Webster production, the same one which delighted Broadway audiences last season and later toured with great success, is eminently superior.

The cast is the same: Paul Robeson as Othello, Jose Ferrer as Iago and Uta Hagen as Desdemona.

* * *

HARRY BLOOMFIELD, ERSTWHILE righthand man for Michael Todd and more recently for Billy Rose, on Wednesday evening brought a new Elsa Shelley play, "Foxhole in the Parlor," to the Booth Theater. Miss Shelley, whose first play, "Pick-Up Girl," was presented last year, has managed to repeat the mistakes of her earlier play.

* * *

PROBABLY THE NICEST THING to say about "Blue Holiday," an all-Negro variety show which opened Monday at the Belasco Theater, is that it definitely is not representative of Negro entertainment. The sprightliness and verve of other Negro shows is absent.

'OTHELLO' REVIVAL TO RUN TILL JUNE 9

New York Times

Engagement at City Center Is Extended—Eddie Mayerhoff on Varieties Bill

5-25-45

By SAM ZOLOTOW

When an attraction catches on, ways and means are generally found for an extension of the booking—even for a repeat engagement. It's as simple as that. For example, take "Othello," in which Paul Robeson, Jose Ferrer and Uta Hagen are co-starred at the City Center. Scheduled to end a fortnight's run on June 3, the revival will continue for another week through June 9. Due to a previous commitment of Mr. Robeson, the performance of June 8 will be skipped in favor of one on June 4. Henceforth the curtain for the matinees will rise at 2:20 and at night at 8:20, instead of ten minutes later in each instance.

5-25-45

Billy Rose intends to have as diversified an entertainment as possible in the first edition of his "Concert-Varieties," opening next Friday night at the Ziegfeld. Realizing that the comedy section was weak, he bolstered it up by engaging Zero Mostel. For good measure he has just added Eddie Mayehoff and it is quite likely that Imogene Coca will be on hand, too. A recent addition to the program is Walter Hautzig, a pianist with a classical bent.

Erlanger's 'Othello' Is Lengthy, but Interesting

Performance Rated Better Than in 1944

Chicago Tribune 4-15-45

By Claudia Cassidy

Much as I dislike being on the theatrical fence, which is both uncomfortable and unconvincing, that is where I am in the matter of the Erlanger's "Othello." A year ago I saw it on the heels of New York's thunderous tho never unanimous acclaim, and was bitterly disappointed. Last week I saw it again, expecting little, and was agreeably surprised. It isn't great Shakespeare and it falls far below the best of Margaret Webster's productions with Maurice Evans, but it is an interesting performance if you have the endurance to sit thru the uncut play from 8:15 until 11:30, with brief time out for whatever you smoke nowadays instead of a cigaret.

Now I have a lot of persistence, but not much patience. I can sit quietly for hours if I am interested, but I fidget after five minutes if I am bored. I sat quietly enough thru all of this "Othello" a morning newspaper's war time deadline would permit me to see, but maybe my friends are right who tell me I got

Paul Robeson — José Ferrer

4-15-45

out in the nick of time. In this version Desdemona is as long a'dying as Tristan, and it takes talent to keep an audience attentive at so prolonged a death rattle.

My reason for being happier at the second visit was that Mr. Robeson was giving a better performance. Not better, perhaps, than at London's opening or New York's, but better than I saw in February, 1944. That "Othello" seemed to me to have blotted out the fire, the passion, and the terror that are the lifeblood of the tragedy, and I apologized, belatedly, to Verdi for having wondered over the years why he had made Otello a tenor rather than a baritone. Malevolence, I decided, can lie in the lower range, and infinite compassion, but it lacks the blazing onslaught of destructive rage that pours in molten fury from the throat of the great dramatic tenor. Pain, I decided, is a high note, primitive and piercing.

Mr. Robeson, then as now, was a magnificent figure [no, I don't know either why a warrior constantly wears a dressing gown] with a wonderful voice, but not, in the creative sense of the term, an actor. He was, and is, a tormented, bewildered man goaded to self-betrayal. But now he has more grip on himself and is not quite so monotonous. I question the wisdom of his smiling efforts to be ingratiating or the doting manner in which he expresses the uxorious. Othello should be sketched in bolder strokes. But a hint of the terrifying has crept into his anger, which was not there when I saw him before, and tho the tongues of flaming rage that sometimes lick the black velvet of his voice may be false prophets of volcanic eruption that never comes, at least they are tantalizing indications of smouldering lava that might burst into incandescent, inundating drama. 4-15-45

Perhaps it is this hint of what might be rather than what actually is that makes me rank Mr. Robeson's Othello higher than José Ferrer's Iago, which to many people runs off with the show. I agree that Mr. Ferrer achieves what he sets out to do. My quarrel is not with his marksmanship, but with his target. The battle of "Othello" is in many ways that of the bullring, and Iago is not the matador but the banderillero whose darts prick the maddened bull of a warrior to self-destruction. He should have an exquisite grace of timing. Mr. Ferrer is clever, but not particularly adroit of voice or body, and I find him pedestrian rather than brilliant.

In general, this is an "Othello" that makes painstaking sense rather than sharply focused theater. Margaret Webster's direction and Robert Edmond Jones' unpersuasive décor see to that. Uta Hagen drifts about in charming costumes and flutes Desdemona's lines in a detached soprano. Ralph Clanton's Cassio looks like a find for bravura theater, but most of the brand new cast make you wonder what the casting overlords turn down one-half so dreadful as the stuff they hire.

• • •

Of course, by this time you know "The Glass Menagerie" walked off with the New York drama critics' award for the best play of the season, and John Chapman tells about it on another page. Meanwhile, I wonder if you saw George Jean Nathan's piece about the play in the New York Journal-American of April 9. It is chiefly a tribute to Eddie Dowling for sticking to his theatrical guns in face of almost incredible opposition.. Some of the stories I knew, but one of them I didn't know, and it stuns me. According to Mr. Nathan, when Theresa Helburn of the Theater Guild came here to see "The Glass Menagerie" at the Civic theater, Mr. Dowling importuned her to lend the play the Guild's subscription audiences—for, as usual, the Guild is short of plays this season. Mr. Nathan says Miss Helburn refused on grounds that the play "was much too delicate for her to take a chance on." Doesn't that make the Guild much too dangerously incompetent for the public to take a chance on?

• • •

Anyway, it was doubly to "The Glass Menagerie's" credit that it had competition. Straggling votes went to "Harvey," "A Bell for Adano," and "I Remember Mama," and it's always nicer to win over odds. I haven't seen any of these plays, but "A Bell for Adano" has just been published by Alfred A. Knopf for the usual $2, and is worth reading as well as seeing. Paul Osborn has done a remarkable job with John Hersey's novel. I hope Fredric March sticks by the ship until it comes to Chicago.

'Othello' With Paul Robeson Returns to City Center May 22

Daily Worker 5-1-45

The Theater Guild's record-holding Shakespearean presentation, the Margaret Webster production of **Othello**, starring Paul Robeson, Jose Ferrer and Uta Hagen, will return from a triumphant transcontinental tour for an engagement of two weeks only at the City Center, beginning on Tuesday, May 22, it was announced today.

Mail orders will be accepted now for all performances, which will be played at a $2.40 to 90 cent scale for all performances. Matinees will be played on Wednesday and Saturday. 5-1-45

Now playing in Chicago, **Othello** has broken every box office and engagement record for Shakespeare ever since it wound up its unprecedented engagement in New York last season. It had marked up 296 performances, the longest Shakespearean run in Broadway history, before it began travelling through Canada and this country.

Directed by Miss Webster, **Othello** was designed and lighted by Robert Edmond Jones. John Haggott served as associate producer.

PAUL ROBESON is handed the No. 1 laurels for his superb acting in "Othello" and as a staunch foe of racial hatred, intolerance and religious bigotry.

Robeson's "Othello" on record

Los Angeles Tribune Calif. 1-8-45

Paul Robeson's "Othello," with Jose Ferrer, Uta Hagen and the supporting cast, has been recorded on Columbia records and is being put on sale this month, it was announced this week.

In three volumes of 17 and 12-inch records, the recording of the Theatre Guild's production of the Shakespearean classic is made almost in its entirety. Main deletion was the minor sub-plot involving the love affair of Cassio and Bianca.

A tribute to Robeson's portrayal of the Moor of Venice is paid in the fly leaves of the album by Goddard Lieberson, director of Masterworks Division of the Columbia Recording corporation. Lieberson said: 1-8-45

"It is fairly cretain that from this point onward, no one will think of Othello without immediately picturing to himself the impressive figure of Paul Robeson and hearing inwardly the vocal splendor of his delivery of the magnificent lines of Shakespeare's tragedy."

A contribution to the controversy which often rages over whether or not Shakespeare meant his Moor to be a Negro or not, is made in an interpretation of the play, written by Theodore Spencer, Harvard University professor and author of "Shakespeare and the Nature of Man." Dr. Spencer's notes are also contained in the fly leaves of the album.

"To Shakespeare, in this play as in his earlier Titus Andronicus, a 'Moor' was a Negro," Dr. Spencer declared, continuing: "Brabantio refers to Othello's 'sooty bosom,' the Duke of Venice refers to Othello's blackness, and Othello himself says, 'I am black.'"

Further comments by the professor on the role assayed by Robeson include the following:

"Until Iago (Jose Ferrer) gets to work on him, Othello has no self-consciousness about the matter; his color is not important. What is important is that he is a first-class professional soldier, loyally serving the state which employs him, a man of great integrity whose profession has been his whole life. He is no ordinary soldier either, but, as he tells us almost at once, a man of royal birth, who has had extraordinary adventures in remarkable places, and whose career is bordered with fringes of magic. His life of action has, in his own eyes, a kind of halo around it, and the surrendering of it to Desdemona is an act which only great love could bring about. 1-8-45

"Thus when Iago destroys Othello's belief in Desdemona's loyalty, something much bigger and more terrible than the emotion of mere jealousy takes place in Othello's soul. Jealousy—the word is chiefly used by Iago—is part of it, but the apparent falseness of Desdemona is a worse betrayal than anything connoted by so essentially shrivelling an emotion. It is Othello's whole life—his career and his love together, the two inseparably interwoven—that is destroyed, and when Iago has persuaded him of Desdemona's dishonesty, he must say farewell to the entire wonderful career that he has entrusted to her.

"Consequently there is a terrible tragic irony in the fact that when Othello kills Desdemona, he sees himself, not as an outraged husband—nothing so small as that—but as the minister of eternal justice. 1-8-45

"And the mental agony he suffers when he learns that he has been fooled is more than he can bear; suicide is the only way out."

'Othello,' Guild Revival, Booked at City Center, May 22-June 2 —Frank Fay's Contract With 'Harvey' Extended to June, '46

N. Y. Times 4-26-45

By SAM ZOLOTOW

It's no sinecure booking worthwhile attractions for a house the size of the City Center. By diligent effort the powers-that-be manage to line up consecutive bookings at prices within the reach of all. Just booked for May 22-June 2 is the Theatre Guild's famed revival of "Othello." Co-starring Paul Robeson, Jose Ferrer and Uta Hagen, the Shakespearean play will wind up its transcontinental travels here after traipsing around since Sept. 2. And may we remind you that this same production achieved a run of 296 performances in New York before going on the road. That's not bad for any play, let alone Shakespeare. "Othello" will follow on the heels of "Carmen Jones," May 2-19. All performances for both shows have a uniform scale, ninety cents to $2.40. 4-26-45

Outstanding Actor Awarded For Work

Daily World Atlanta, Ga.

Also Active In General Field Of Racial Welfare

5-1-45

NEW YORK — (S N S) — Paul Robeson, internationally famous actor, concert artist, and athlete, has been awarded the 30th Spingarn Medal it was announced April 26 by Dr. John Haynes Holmes, chairman of the award committee.

Mr. Robeson received the award for his outstanding achievements in the theatre, on the concert stage, and in the general field of racial welfare. The latest triumph in his long public career is his appearance in Margaret Webster's production of "Othello."

Mr. Robeson has appeared in numerous legitimate plays including "Emperor Jones," "All God's Chillun," "Porgy," "Black Boy," "The Hairy Ape," and "Stevedore." In the films he has appeared in "Emperor Jones," "Showboat," "Saunders of the River," "King Solomon's Mines," "Jericho," and others.

BEGAN IN 1925

He gave his first concert performance as a singer in 1925, and made his first concert tour of America in 1929. His concert tours of Europe occurred in 1926-28, 1931 and 1938, with a memorable tour of Russia in 1936.

Mr. Robeson is a graduate of Rutgers college and Columbia university. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He was a four-letter man at Rutgers and was all-American end on Walter Camp's team in 1918. He is married and has a son who is now a sophomore at Cornell. 5-1-45

The Spingarn Medal was instituted by the late J. E. Singarn, for many years president of the N. A. A. C. P., to go to the "man or woman of African descent and American citizenship, who shall have made the highest achievement during the preceding year or years in any honorable field of human endeavor" The award to Mr. Robeson is considered the Spingarn Medal for 1944. The award is customarily presented at the annual conference of the NAACP, but on account of wartime restrictions the conference has been cancelled this year. In view of this circumstance the medal will be formally presented at a date and place to be announced later.

Robeson Writes History At Erlanger With Masterful Acting In 'Othello'

Chicago Defender
4-21-45

By BEN BURNS

History is being written by the great Paul Robeson these nights at the Erlanger theater in the loop. It is more than theatrical history. It is epoc-making, precedent-shattering American history that is a happy omen of a new world acomin' in U. S. race relations.

But Robeson's magnificent performance as "Othello" is important not only because it is a historic event. Its significance goes further than the simple fact that Robeson is the first Negro to play "Othello" on an American stage and kiss a white woman before a mixed audience.

Perhaps even more remarkable is Robeson's masterful ability to translate this great work of Shakespeare into human terms, into thrilling, moving drama understandable to the everyday common man. "Othello," as played by Robeson and a splendid supporting cast, is not the heavy-handed Elizabethian drama of free verse that is crammed down the throats of unwilling students. The Erlanger production is as modern and up-to-date as a jazz concert.

Streamlined Production

Much of the credit for streamlining Shakespeare and making "Othello" something that can be appreciated by the average John Q. Public belongs to Margaret Webster, who directed and produced the play. She made two punchy, potent acts out of five. She has added new meaning, new meat to Shakespeare's lines. She has given the play at 20th century transfusion of heightened action and swift-moving suspense.

In past productions the plot of "Othello" has too often been obscured by droning recitations of its passages with emphasis on its beautiful language. The foreboding, exciting plot has been lost, strayed or stolen somewhere en route to the bloody climax that out-thrills any Hollywood murder mystery.

4-21-45

Simple as the story is, there can be no doubt that it is a tale that will live for many years as a classic portrait of villainy. Few blackguards can match Iago. He is a wily gent, who in his greedy grasp for political power, plants the seed of jealousy in Othello's heart and brings on a triple tragedy.

Exciting Action

Othello is the Moor general who marries the beautiful Desdemona despite her father's entreaties that sound somewhat like today's "would you want your daughter to marry a nigger?" arguments. After conquering the Turks, Othello is a hero hailed by the populace of Cypress as their savior.

Iago begins his campaign to knife Othello by hints that his wife, Desdemona, is not loyal and has given herself to one of Othello's officers, Cassius. Once the seeds of jealousy have taken root, they torment Othello until in desperation he murders his wife and then takes his own life. Iago kills his own wife when she reveals his villainy.

4-26-45

Out of this plot, Miss Webster has retained the bare essentials and woven a pattern of exciting action that leaves the Erlanger theater audience limp at the final curtain. Carrying the burden of the play on his shoulders is the stealthy Jose Ferrer as Iago, whose performance is memorable theater. His reading of Shakespeare's lines gives entirely new nuances and significance to the character of Iago. Uta Hagen makes a beautiful Desdemona.

But standing head and shoulders above all not only physically but as a brilliant actor is Paul Robeson, whose resonant voice and perfect diction make "Othello" the outstanding triumph of the theater in the past decade. His achievement in bringing "Othello" down to terms of today will live and be remembered for years to come. To miss Robeson in "Othello" is to miss history in the making.

Paul Robeson, Star Of "Othello," Becomes 30th Spingarn Medalist

AGE — New York

Paul Robeson, Internationally famous actor, concert artist, and athlete, has been awarded the 30th Spingarn Medal it was announced Tnursday by Dr. John Haynes Holmes, chairman of the award committee.

5-5-45

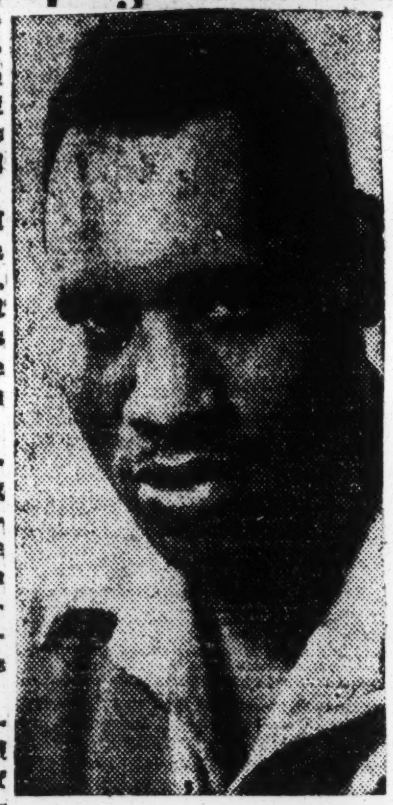
Mr. Robeson received the award for his outstanding achievements in the theatre, on the concert stage, and in the general field of racial welfare. The latest triumph in his long public career is his appearance in Margaret Webster's production of "Othello."

Mr. Robeson has appeared in numerous legitimate plays including "Emperor Jones," "All God's Chillun," "Porgy," "Black Boy," "The Hairy Ape," and "Stevedore." In the films he has appeared in "Emperor Jones," "Showboat," "Saunders of the River," "King Solomon's Mines," "Jericho," and others.

He gave his first concert performance as a singer in 1925, and made his first concert tour of America in 1929. His concert tours of Europe occurred in 1926-28, 1931 and 1938, with a memorable tour of Russia in 1936.

5-5-45

Mr. Robeson is a graduate of Rutgers College and Columbia University. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He was a four-letter man at Rutgers and was all-American end on Walter Camp's team in 1918. He is married and has a son who is now a sophomore at Cornell.



Robeson Says Public Wants No More Burnt Cork 'Othellos'

Atlanta World 2-23-45

Work Exacting, Famed Actor Tells Reporter

By HARRY LEVETTE

LOS ANGELES—(ANP)— "Yes, I believe that the success of this play, 'Othello' has had all over the country will whet the public's appetite for other Shakespearean plays, in fact create a veritable renaissance of his and similar works,' declared world famous Paul Robeson during an interview last week. 2-23-45

And while a long line of colored and white autograph hunters and admirers waited in the narrow hall leading to hi dressing room at at the Baltimore theatre, the great artist, still in his long robe as Othello, sat and unhurriedly discussed the recations to his portrayal of the Moor of Venince and the future of the Negro on the stage. 2-23-45

"The work has been very exacting and the emotional strain has been very great, but I am glad if it has helped my people to a fuller recognition on the stage and in pictures.' he said. "However I firmly believe that the lovers of Shakepreare have become awakened to the realization that the role definitely belongs to a Negro and that the naturalness is lost when a white man does it under burn cork I doubt if they will be satisfied to accept such in the future. 2-23-45

Becoming enthusiastic, Mr. Robson why colored actors should not play all the characters in others of Shakespeare's play. He cited the success Canada Lee is making as Caliban in the 'Tempest' as an example and declared that although both New Orleans and Kansas City wanted him to play Othello there he would not unless they dropped their segregation policies.

88a-1945

Daughter of NAACP Prexy Assigned Role of Nonnie in "Strange Fruit"

The Journal and Guide

JANE WHITE, debutant Smith College graduate daughter of Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, stole a march on aspiring young acresses when Producer Jose Ferrer's office announced Monday that he has signed Jane the role of Nonnie in his forthcoming production of "Strange Fruit" coming to Broadway next month. Miss White, whose sole previous training was with Dick Campbell's Rose McClendon Players, is the first person so far signed by Ferrer though there are 33 speaking parts in the show.

Norfolk, Virginia 9-8-45

It was announced Monday morning that the Jose Ferrer office has assigned Jane White to the role of Nonnie in the forthcoming production of "Strange Fruit" scheduled for a November opening on Broadway. The announcement created a furor among young aspiring actresses for very few of them knew that Miss White was among the scores of youthful players who are trying out for the role.

Among the ranks of those who missed out on the role is the most surprised element. Miss White, though widely known as the daughter of Executive Secretary Walter White of the NAACP who was an honor graduate at Smith College in June 1943, had had no previous identification with the stage except for an apprenticeship with the Rose McClendon Players a few years ago.

Lillian Smith, who wrote the play script from her popular novel, released statements to the press a few months ago defining the role of Nonnie as one requiring highly sensitive and pantomimic acting. Hundreds of young actresses from all over the country after reading the first story about the possibility that "Strange Fruit" was being made into a play which appeared exclusively in the Amsterdam News over a year ago, have been seeking and aspiring for the part.

At 1270 Sixth Avenue where Jose Ferrer maintains his producing office has been the scene of quite a collection of actresses. Pros and cons have preceded a production of the play. Public reaction varies from those who feel that the pivotal character of Nonnie who causes the tragedy of the story because she, being an educated Negro girl, falls in love with a Georgia white lad, reflects negatively on the Negro woman.

9-8-45

Others feel that Miss Smith's novel is an honest indictment of cultural and racial isolation which is definitely a pro-Negro thesis. Pro or con, the play is definitely headed for Broadway. Though Miss White is the only one given one of the 33 speaking parts in the play, "Strange Fruit" is due on Broadway the week of Nov. 12 and the play will go into rehearsal here Sept. 17. Prior to its local appearance, Producer-director Ferrer will try out the play in Montreal Oct. 13-20; Toronto Oct. 22-27 and Boston Oct. 29-Nov. 10.

Jane White Chosen for Lead Part in 'Strange Fruit' Play

The People's Voice New York, New York 9-15-45

Jane White, daughter of Walter White, has copped the coveted role of Nonnie in the play, "Strange Fruit," which goes into rehearsal next week. Miss White, a graduate of Smith College in 1944, has had no experience on the professional stage. She was chosen from a long line of applicants for the part, many of them professional toupers.

The play, taken from the popular novel by Lillian Smith and produced by Jose Ferrer, sticks closely to the text of the book. It centers around the love of a Negro girl, graduate of college, for the weak, bewildered son of a leading white small-town family in Georgia. Its drama is heightened by a lynching of the wrong man who was accused of killing Nonnie's lover.

Miss White studied modern dancing while in college and had the distinction of being elected president of the Student Council while there.

Miss White did not study dramatics at Smith, but took part in one or two student plays. After graduating from college she took a ten weeks' course at the New School for Social Research here and is employed at the Research Institute of America.

She was elected president of the House of Representatives, one of the three governing bodies of the Student Council, and was the first Negro to be chosen for this position.

JANE WHITE

Strange Fruit Chooses More Lead Roles

Lillian Smith's drama, "Strange Fruit," went into rehearsal Monday with the majority of its leading characters, although two other Negro characters have not yet been selected. Jane White takes the lead part of Nonnie, and Melchor Ferrer (no relation to the producer, Jose Ferrer) plays opposite her as Tracy.

Mr. Ferrer played in several Broadway plays a decade or so ago. Recently he has been working in Hollywood—as producer-director for MGM and as director for Columbia Pictures, with which he is now under contract. Eddie Anderson, Nonnie's brother, will be played by George Oliver, World War II vet, who hails from Chicago and appeared in amateur dramatics.

The part of Henry, the nitwit, will be played by Earl Jones, and Edna Thomas will take the role of Mamie, Henry's mother. Other white actors chosen for parts are Eugenia Rawls, Stephen Chase, Ralph Theodore, and Francis Letton.

Jane White Wins Coveted Role Of Nonnie In B'way Play, "Strange Fruit"

New York Age 9-22-45
N.Y., N.Y.

Monday, September 17th, the dramatization of Lillian Smith's controversial novel, "Strange Fruit" went into rehersal with Jane White, talented daughter of Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, in the stellar role of Nonnie. The work is being produced and directed by Jose Ferrar, who was seen on Broadway last season in "Othello."

Although the 1944 graduate of Smith College has had no professional stage experience, she was chosen from a long list of applicants who literally gave their eye tooth for the part. While at college, Miss White studied modern dancing and also participated in two of the student plays.

At the time Miss White was given the coveted role of Nonnie she was employed at the Research Institute of America after completing a ten weeks course at the New School for Social Research.

Other members of the cast are Melchor Ferrer, Eugenia Rawls, Earl Jones, Stephen Chase, George Oliver, Ralph Theodore, Edna Thomas and Francis Letton.

9-22-45

George Greenberg will be production assistant;; Robinson Stone, assistant to Mr. Ferrer and June Stewart, assistant stage manager. The production will be designed and lighted by George Jenkins.

"Strange Fruit" will begin its prior-to-Broadway tour on October 13th at His Majesty's Theatre in Montreal. The play will reach Broadway week of November 11th.

Ex-Tribune sports editor wins "Strange Fruit" role

The Los Angeles Tribune Los Angeles, California
10-1-45

NEW YORK—Handsome young George Oliver, former TRIBUNE sports editor and World War II veteran, has been chosen for the part of Eddie, brother of the heroine in "Strange Fruit," controversial Lillian Smith novel, which comes to Broadway this fall.

Oliver, who hails originally from Chicago, served on the TRIBUNE staff in 1942, shortly before his induction into the Army. He was released from the Army last January after being stationed at Tuskegee Army Air field where he served in public relations. He is 26.

The part of Eddie is the second most important male role in the play. To Eddie, dapper young Northern salesman, is delegated the tragic duty of killing his sister's betrayer and of attempting to elude the lynchers and make his way back up north.

The lead male part has also been filled, by Melchor Ferrer, no relation to producer Jose Ferrer. Ferrer, in the role of the weak white youth who is loved by Nonnie, the beautiful young Negro heroine, returns to Broadway for the first time in 10 years. He has been working recently in Hollywood as producer-director for MGM, and as a director at Columbia studios, where he is under contract.

10-1-45

The part of Henry, who is lynched for the crime he did not commit, is played by Earl Jones. Edna Thomas has won the role of Mamie, his mother. Jane White, daughter of Walter White, of the NAACP, has the play's lead. Rehearsals were begun last Monday.

man graduates, who asserted most vehemently that girls with college educations didn't go back to their small towns, take $8 a week servant jobs, and settle down to semi-serfdom for the rest of their lives. If they went back, certainly they bettered their status.

What—came the frequent question—was the good of a college education? And why—Spelmanites asked—must they be Spelman students? Miss Smith, herself on the spot in many a forum and seminar discussion group, was always explaining that she didn't mean to infer that all Spelman students were like Nonnie and Bess, but that her purpose was to portray intelligent, courageous understanding women in her novel of "human relationships." And it did happen, sometimes, she insisted, that girls with college education—white and Negro girls—worked in kitchens!

Atoca vs. Bess

In actual behavior, Dorothy Atoca from Spelman did everything "Strange Fruit's" Bess from Spelman did not do. During her undergraduate years as a member of the Atlanta University Little Theatre group, Dorothy developed into one of the finest, most sensitive young actresses on the amateur stage. Her portrayal of the classic "Medea" of the Countee Cullen version, staged during playwright Owen Dodsens' days with the Atlanta university group, won for her one of the undergraduate Rosenwald fellowships.

Dorothy headed straight for New York and the New School for Social Research where she studied for a year. One of her latest ventures in the theatre was participation in the recent drama festival at Hampton institute as a member of Owen Dodson's special dramatic group. Her outstanding role with that group was that of the queen in "Hamlet."

Spelman Grad Gets 'Be Role In 'Strange Fruit'

The Chicago Defender Chicago, Illinois
10-13-45

NEW YORK — (ANP) — Fate pulled a winner from its bag of tricks when Dorothy Ateca, a graduate of Spelman college, was chosen by Jose Ferrer to play the role of "Bess" in the forthcoming production of "Strange Fruit."

Lillian Smith's description of her now famous Nonnie and Bess as Spelman students brought nation-wide criticism from people generally and particularly from Spelman graduates, who asserted most vehemently that girls with college educations didn't go back to their small towns, take $8 a week servant jobs, and settle down to semi-serfdom for the rest of their lives. If they went back, certainly they bettered their status.

What—came the frequent question—was the good of a college education? And why—Spelmanites asked—must they be Spelman students? Miss Smith, herself on the spot in many a forum and seminar discussion group, was always explaining that she didn't mean to infer that all Spelman students were like Nonnie and Bess, but that her purpose was to portray intelligent, courageous understanding women in her novel of "human relationships." And it did happen, sometimes, she insisted, that girls with college education—white and Negro girls—worked in kitchens!

Atoca vs. Bess

In actual behavior, Dorothy Atoca from Spelman did everything "Strange Fruit's" Bess from Spelman did not do. During her undergraduate years as a member of the Atlanta University Little Theatre group, Dorothy developed into one of the finest, most sensitive young actresses on the amateur stage. Her portrayal of the classic "Medea" of the Countee Cullen version, staged during playwright Owen Dodsens' days with the Atlanta university group, won for her one of the undergraduate Rosenwald fellowships.

Dorothy headed straight for New York and the New School for Social Research where she studied for a year. One of her latest ventures in the theatre was participation in the recent drama festival at Hampton institute as a member of Owen Dodson's special dramatic group. Her outstanding role with that group was that of the queen in "Hamlet."

Two years ago she married James M. Carter, a young physician, and they have one child. In the remarkable manner of progressive young American women, Dorothy is carrying both her marriage and career along quite successfully.

Being an excellent actress, she will make of Lillian Smith's Bess an unforgettable character. But when she is finished with the role, Dorothy Ateca from Spelman and "Bess" from Spelman will go their separate ways.

'STRANGE FRUIT' APPROVED

Barred as a Book, Boston Censor Allows It as a Play

New York Times
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BOSTON, Oct. 17—The drama version of Lillian Smith's controversial novel, "Strange Fruit," was approved today by John J. Spencer, Boston City Censor, who found no objection to presenting the play at the Plymouth Theatre here, starting Oct. 29.

10-18-45

A month ago the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that the book was "obscene," indecent and impure" and affirmed the conviction of a Cambridge book store proprietor for selling a copy to create a test case. Boston book sellers had withdrawn the book from sale shortly after it was published.

Mr. Spencer, who saw a performance of the play in Montreal, said that he had asked the management here to "eliminate certain profane uses of the name of God, which are in violation of regulations' and had been informed that they would comply. He said that he did not find in the play the scenes and actions to which the court referred.

Banned Novel OK As Boston Play

P.M.
N.Y. N.Y.

Special Correspondence

BOSTON, Oct. 19.—It's okay with City Censor John J. Spencer to stage here the dramatic adaptation of Lillian Smith's banned-in-Boston novel, *Strange Fruit*.

Spencer, who studied the manuscript of the Jose Ferrer production and travelled to Montreal as a guest of the play's managers to watch its premiere in Montreal Monday night, said: 'I see no objection to the presentation of the drama *Strange Fruit* at Plymouth Theater starting Oct. 29."

10-19-45

The ban on the best-seller book was upheld recently by the State Supreme Judicial Court, which claimed a violation of the State law on literary obscenity. A Cambridge bookseller, as a result, lost his appeal and paid fines of $200.

Spencer declared he had read the high court's 17-page decision, which affirmed the conviction of a Cambridge bookseller for selling the book on which the play is based. "I do not find in the play scenes and actions to which the court made reference." he said.

Jane White Hailed In Quebec Premier Of 'Strange Fruit'

The Chicago Defender Chicago, Illinois
11-3-45

By J. E. E. SAUNDERS
(Defender Staff Correspondent)

MONTREAL, Quebec. — Miss Jane White, daughter of Walter White, secretary of the N.A.A.C.P., received enthusiastic ovation for her performance here last week in the premiere of "Strange Fruit," state production of Lillian Smith's widely discussed novel.

In the role of Nonnie Anderson, Miss White won praise from Canadian critics during the first week of the play's engagement in a Montreal theatre. S. Morgan Powell, writing for the Montreal Star, Canada's leading weekly, stated:

"Miss Jane White invested the role of Nonnie Anderson with an appealing pathos and a quiet dignity that lent it astonishing conviction and deep emotional significance.. For a young actress she plays with remarkable control and admirable poise."

In the play Miss White portrays the daughter of a respectable colored family who has had a college education. After having been seduced by Tracy Dean, white son of a physician, she finds that she is about to become a mother.

Her acting in the scene in which her brother shoots Tracy and makes his sensational get-away is one of the highspots of the play.

Miss White is a graduate of Smith college, and has had two years of study in Paris.

P.M. N.Y. N.Y.
12-9-45

Most to be regretted is the failure of *Strange Fruit*. Of all this season's plays, *Strange Fruit* is the most important and disturbing in its content, and of all this season's playwrights, Lillian Smith is the most honest and uncompromising in her approach. These are virtues which should be given all possible emphasis; yet the fact remains that *Strange Fruit* is just not a good play and is not very often good theater. The reason is understandable enough: a panoramic novel is always extremely difficult to dramatize, and when it is dramatized by some one who is not a playwright, the difficulties become infinitely greater. For Lillian Smith has not only crammed more material into *Strange Fruit* than a play can hold; she has further hurt the play by her inexpert story-telling, her undeveloped dramatic sense. *Strange Fruit* has some scattered good scenes, some eloquent speeches, a few really powerful moments. But its material is not fused. Its drama is not sustained. It sprawls where it should close in; it sags where it should build. I respect Miss Smith for trying to say in the play everything she said in the book, but she has simply not managed to say it.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

Left to right: Juan Hernandez and Ralph Theadore in a scene from Jose Ferrer's production of Lillian Smith's "Strange Fruit" at the Royale Theatre.

'Strange Fruit' Publicist Offers Robeson's View

By SAMUEL SILLEN Daily Worker

Dick Weaver, press representative for **Strange Fruit**, sends me the following: "Every play-goer is entitled to an opinion based on what he sees on the stage of any theatre, which prevents me from denying you the right to have a negative attitude towards **Strange Fruit**, Lillian Smith's dramatization of her novel, now current at the Royale Theatre. New York Sun

"In all fairness to the play, and to what we think it represents, would you be good enough to give equal expression in your column to the opinion of Paul Robeson? The following is his statement on the play: 12-15-45

"'**Strange Fruit was for me a deeply moving experience in terms of the theatre. Its quiet and deadly atmosphere was and is that of any Southern town. For me it is a prophetic play: here colored people of high quality suffer the terrible frustrations of a prejudice-ridden society. Sam's [Dr. Sam Perry's] last speech is clear warning we can't take it any more. America should heed this. The love theme is most tenderly treated and beautifully played by Melchor Ferrer and Jane White. The scene of Edna Thomas with the children is unbearable in its tragic insistence upon a separation that can only lead to injustice and conflict. I wish that every American could see this moving and prophetic play.'**"

I am glad to run this statement, with which I am unable to agree in detail for the reasons indicated in my review of the play.

A public discussion of "**Strange Fruit**: Broadway's Misunderstood Play" will take place next Tuesday evening, Dec. 18, at the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature, N. Y. Public Library, 104 W. 136 St. Lillian Smith and Abram Hill will speak. Admission is free.

"Strange Fruit" And White Culture

By LILLIAN E. SMITH New York Age

Well, "Strange Fruit" is now ready for the harvest . . . It is a fruit that sets some folks' teeth on edge and a fruit that others find tempting and good to the taste. Some (white and colored) are so allergic to it that they walk out of the theater, and some find it so fascinating that they come back two and three times — and pay to do so. 12-15-45

If you ask people what "Strange Fruit" is about you will get many different answers. Many whites will tell you that it is about the "Negro problem," whatever that is. Others will tell you that the author is in favor of intermarriage (she certainly has no objection to it) and that this is her defense of it. A few will tell you that it is an insult to Negro womanhood, and others will say that it is a sneer at white mothers and their sons. But a white Baptist minister of Philadelphia preached a sermon against "Strange Fruit," denouncing it as an attack on the Christian Church (white). He succeeded in getting the white Methodist and Baptist Ministerial Councils to pass resolutions to ban the show, the Methodists asking that it be banned, the Baptists asking that all lines be deleted that made the white ministers appear to be a hypocrite.

The censor of Philadelphia ordered all such deleted, and pressure was exerted from the Mayor's office. No lines were deleted; many other ministers rose up in protest against the proposed banning. the theatre was packed to overflowing and — the show went on. The censor, by the way, said that it was the first time in ten years that a playright had refused to make the deletions ordered. He commented that he had lost a lot of face, but the author replied that his loss of face was better than her loss of integrity.

Then "Strange Fruit" came to New York. The fight began again. This time the technique was the smothering process. Three Broadway drama critics (all white Southerners) used the old and well-worn southern formula of saying the show was dull and boring. Being a Georgia white woman, I had a good laugh. The idea of any white Southern man being bored with "Strange Fruit" is plain funny. But many readers of the New York press are not southern white women who know their old South and hence the trick was not without its deadly effect.

N.Y. Times

Yet through it all, from Montreal to Toronto, to Boston, to Philadelphia, to New York, not one critic has said what the play is really about, and that seems an incredible thing. It is a play about human beings trapped and destroyed by segregation, the prevailing pattern of our white culture; but no one has said so. It is about the deep heartbreaking conflict between Christianity and White Supremacy, but no one has mentioned this. It is about the white man and his infatuation with his own importance; it is about a disease of the heart and mind that destroys all our people, whatever their color, if they come too close to it. It is a play about you and me and the profound difficulty we have in becoming sane, mature human beings, but no one has mentioned this. Yet the play goes on, making friends and enemies, and making lots of them. One wonders which will win as the weeks go by, the friends or the enemies. For the decision may be important, not for the play's author, nor its producers, but for white people and colored people living in this segregated culture of ours.

"Strange Fruit" Lacking as Drama, Reeks with Epithets

Afro American
Baltimore, Md.
-24-45

Veteran Actors Hold Play Up

By E. B. REA
AFRO Theatrical Editor

"STRANGE FRUIT," a play in a prologue, two acts of 14 scenes, and an epilogue, dramatized by Lillian Smith (with the assistance of Esther Smith), from her own novel of the same title, staged and produced by Jose Ferrer supervised by Arthur S. Friend, settings and lighting by George Jenkins, costumes by Patricia Montgomery, at the Forrest Theatre. The cast: 11-24-45

CAST

Ed Anderson	George B. Oliver
Preacher Dunwoodie	Stephen Chase
Tom Harris	Ralph Theodore
Dee Cassidy	Ralph Yaryan
Gabe	Alonzo Bosan
Harriett Harris	Eugenia Rawls
Tracy Deen	Melchor Ferrer
Crazy Carl	Robinson Stone
Charlie Harris	Francis Letton
Doug	Jay Norris
Alma Deen	Vera Allen
Sam Perry	Juan Hernandez
Laura Deen	Charlotte Keene
Tut Deen	Frank Twedell
Nonie Anderson	Jae White
Bess Anderson	Dorothy Carter
Henry McIntosh	Earl Jones
Jackie	Juan Hernandez Jr.
Salamander	Hanson Elkins
Chuck	Ralph Meeker
Miss Sadie	Mary Fletcher
Miss Belle	Esther Smith

Prologue: Peter Griffith, Richard Williams, Edna Thomas, Betty Lou Kern, Ken Renard.

PHILADELPHIA

Racial resentments, flaming passions, mob violence, religious hypocrisy, blind bigotry and prejudices of the South make up the ingredients fo dramatic dynamite in teh stage version of Lillian Smith's "Strange Fruit," currently showing at the Forrest Theatre.

All of these are brought out in the raw as the play reveals the inevitably tragic love affair between a beautiful, well-educated girl, Nonie Anderson, played by Jane White, and a young neurotic white veteran of World War I, Tracy Dean, played by Melchor Ferrer, with the background centered in Maxwell, a small Georgia town.

Neither the girl nor her paramour is strong enough to resist the tide of manifested tradition which rises to flood proportions, leaving none of the town's inhabitants completely untouched as the play subsides apparently to normal.

Precipitates Tragedy

There is a vast difference between the illicit love proclivities of a colored boy and a white girl in Broadway's "Deep Are the Roots" and "Strange Fruit." In the former it is denied consummation, in the latter it is indulged, with results tat it precipitate inevitable tragedy.

11-24-45

JANE WHITE.

"Strange Fruit" can be a controversal play, but in its rawness it is an inescapable reality, considering whatever one's personal taste and preference may be. It's not sterotyped. It's purely a characterization of a blase social order.

There are moving moments in the play. But as a whole it is sprawling, cluttered and clumsy, even though Miss Smith diffuses her intimate understanding of personal knowledge in it.

Short on Dramtics

There is not much dramatic drive and strength. The play is kept from falling apart by its veteran actors, Juano Hernandez, who plays a convincing role as Dr. Sam Perry; Dorothy Carter as Bess Anderson, Nonie's sister; Edna Thomas as Mamie McIntosh, and Ralph Theodore as Tom Harris, the rich mill operator.

Miss White, as Nonie, the light skinned girl, inexperienced as a dramatist, does not give an overconvincing performance as she misses her dramatic cue in the scene where her white lover casts her aside when she tells him that she is going to have a baby, one of the most poignant and sympathetic scenes in the play.

She doesn't display the anger of a woman scorned (this might come later), when Tracy tells her that he's going to marry a white girl of his own class, nor when her enraged brother, Ed (George Oliver), kills the white youth and flees from the community, and the crime is fastened upon her "bought" husband (so that her child can have a name) by the mob that must have a victim, and lynches him.

Dominated by Epithets

While Toronto and Montreal accepted the play in its entirely, Boston censored some of its cussing and epithets, which dominate the play throughout. These were re-inserted for the showing here without objections.

Tenseness is noticeable in the opening scene as a colored soldier passes a corner drug store and a white mill hand remarks:

"It makes me plum puke to see a black coon in a uniform . . . you never can tell what a d—y will do when in a uniform. There's bound to be trouble."

Frightening Silence

The mixed audience took it with a frightening silence. Colored casting a leering glance at the whites, and the whites sneaking a look at them. However, their attitudes softened and all settled down to accept the play as presented.

Tracy's domineering, over-religious mother and a white opportunist preacher add fair performance to the production as upholders of Southern aristocracy and hypocrisy.

Hernandez, as Dr. Harris, who had returned to Maxwell and closed both his eyes and tongue, because it was safter than to stand up against white men, hit his dramatic peak by finally bursting into a rage against the mill owner who refused to intercede in the lynching.

Womanhood Scorned

Harris threatened him with the rebuke: "Shut up you black so and so, no n—r can talk to a white amn like that and live."

There is a scornful attitude shown against colored womanhood as the minister tells Tracy, "no decent white men want colored women. They are not clean." Resentment against colored in general.

However, there is the ever-present rebellious spirit among the colored characters, though palliated most of the time by fear and the desire to keep peace in the community.

Whites Look Ahead

As the play ends, following the burial of the white youth and the mob having satisfied its bloodthirsty craving, serenity returns, the whites have seen the light and look for new fields as life goes on.

The play has possibilities of improving from a production standpoint, and the actors have a chance to strengthen their dramatic abilities, but as for the play's theme and underlying ideas, whatever value it might have, remains to be seen.

Strange Fruit (adapted from Lillian Smith's novel by the author, with the assistance of Esther Smith; produced by José Ferrer), on the stage, as in book form, pulls no sociological punches. But the play lacks dramatic punch. A fledgling Broadway playwright, Lillian Smith too often wobbles in her storytelling, too often fails to pick up the dramatic scent. An unconverted novelist, she has gamely but unwisely tried to transfer to the stage the whole life of a Georgia town. The result is far less spacious than sprawling.

The well-known story of *Strange Fruit* is, to be sure, a steadily enlarging one. The star-crossed love of white Tracy Deen (Melchor Ferrer) and Negro Nonnie Anderson (Jane White) widens out beyond

Richard Tucker-Graphic House

FERRER & WHITE

The author knew she was breaking rules.

Chicago, Ill.

personal tragedy into social tragedy. The rooted Southern prejudices, the rankling inequalities, the violence that leads Nonnie's brother to murder Tracy, the feeling that leads a mob to lynch an innocent Negro for the crime—all these are like pieces in a sociological puzzle.

As mere pieces a few of them are vivid, even explosive. But with its dozen scenes and three dozen characters, *Strange Fruit* is jumpy, congested, disordered. As theater, it has far too little excitement; as drama, far too little thrust.

12-10-45

Though fully aware of her theatrical inexperience, Novelist Lillian Smith decided to dramatize *Strange Fruit* herself for fear that an "outside dramatist" would misrepresent the book. Says she: "I knew it would have been easy to make a racial *Romeo and Juliet* out of it . . . I wanted a panoramic picture of human beings—white and colored—trapped by the whole mechanism of segregation. I broke a great many rules but I knew what rules I was breaking . . . I'm proud of it . . . I wouldn't change a word."

Love Scene with White Man in "Strange Fruit" Takes Shape

Author-Director. Lillian Smith, who adapted her own best selling novel, "Strange Fruit," into a stage play, watches intently while Jose Ferrer (with pipe) directs the two leads, Melchor Ferrer, (Tracy) and Jane White (Nonnie) in one of their scenes during a rehearsal of the play. The large cast of 35, includes George Oliver, recently released from the Army, as the restless "Eddie," Juano Hernandez, as "Sam" the stable, intelligent and understanding Negro doctor, Dorothy Carter who has recently arrived from Atlanta University's little theatre, as "Bess," older sister to "Nonnie" and "Eddie," Edna Thomas as "Mamie," Earl Jones as "Henry," Hernandez's son, Juan Jose as little "Henry," Vera Allen, Frank Tweddell, Charlotte Keane, Jay Norris, Mary Fletcher, Robinson Stone, Peter Griffith, Richard Williams, Phyllis DeBus, Betty Lou Klein, Murray Hamilton, Ellsworth Wright, (another vet) Ralph Meeker, Doris Block, Aalph Theodore, Stephen Chase, Francis Letton, Alonza Bosan, Ted Yaryan, Esther Smith, Hanson W. Elkins, Ken Renard and Eugenia Rawls. The cast entrained for Toronto, Canada, last Sunday where it will have its final week of rehearsals prior to opening at His Majesty's Theatre, October 13. Following will be a two week engagement in Boston where there is still a ban on the book. Opening date for B'way is set for November 11—(Foto by

Jane White Anxious to Play

Sees Role as Human Problem, the Same as Would Affect Any Class

By DON de LEIGHBUR

NEW YORK — Jane White, daughter of the NAACP'S Walter White, who was selected to play the controversial role of Nonnie in the stage adaptation of Lillian Smith's best seller, "Strange Fruit," was interviewed recently by a staff writer of the Michigan Chronicle.

What she had to say was revealing, to say the least. It will be remembered that Miss White, a Smith College graduate, but inexperienced as an actress, was picked by Jose Ferrer for the play at the same time her father was roundly rapping a proposed musical comedy, "St. Louis Woman," by two eminent colored writers, Countee Cullen and Arna Bontemps.

Because of the censure of White, backed by the NAACP Lena Horne was forced out of the lead role and several outstanding female actresses were made leery of the role because they feared criticism, mainly from the NAACP.

Feels Close to Lead

"I feel Nonnie is a complex part, but I feel very close to her," Miss White stated in the interview. It is an emotional closeness, as well as an intellectual. I was terribly anxious to have the part. I can't think of anything I'd rather less do than cast a slur on educated womanhood.

"I think in the theatre, as in all the arts, we have got to reach the point where we have the ability to see a given character ar representative of himself alone and not representative of a race, sex, or class.

"I do hope that the general impression left with the audience of Nonnie is one of strength, loyalty and womanliness. She should be the kind whose strength overcomes race.

"The fellow playing Tracy (the white man who debases Nonnie and then returns to his own woman) and I see eye on it and in our love scenes we want to play it as a human problem and to show that it would be the same if it were a Jew and a Gentile, a Catholic and a Protestant, or red-blue."

Miss White Explains

The point of this piece is not to object to lovemaking on the part of a white man to a colored girl on the stage. Paul Robeson did such scenes in "Othello" with the white actress, Uta Hagen. It is not without bounds for the situation to happen the other way around. But the question has been already asked: If Tracy were to be a light-skinned colored actor, would Miss White have been as anxious to play the part as she aid she was? In talking about playing the part, Miss Scott, who interviewed her, had this to say: "The first thing that struck me when I walked into the Walter White apartment, and saw young, attractive Jane White, was how well she personifies the character of 'Nonnie'."

Said Miss White: "I want very much to play with that sensitiveness but without any suggestion of vaguenes. I don't think you ever care about a character that is fey and withdrawn. I'd like to play her to show her sensitive qualities, but not that she is daft."

"Strange Fruit" Good, But Long

According to the Montreal drama critics, Strange Fruit, which saw the light of day in that city last Saturday night, suffers from too many scenes, which consumed four hours of playing time. Eugene O'Neil and the Theatre Guild are the only other outfit who in recent years have prevailed upon an audience to spend more than two and a half hours in a legitimate theatre; but in their case, they did give the customers time to go out for dinner.

George MacDonald of the Canadian Press said: "The play follows the book faithfully. It has been given tiptop treatment by producer Jose Ferrer; scenery is ample—perhaps too much so, for four hours were required to present the production."

Herbert Whittaker of the Montreal Gazette: "Strange Fruit comes to the stage with a faithfulness rarely found in the wedding of a book and theatre."

All agree that the cast is good and with pruning, the show will come to New York in tip top shape and proper running time.

LOOKERS—The principals of "Strange Fruit", the controversial drama which opens on Broadway next month are the handsome trio above. Reading from left to right are George Oliver, who once "held down the sports desk" on the TRIBUNE, and who plays Ed Anderson, brother of Nonnie in the play; Jane White, daughter of race leader Walter White, who is Nonnie: and Earl Jones, who plays Henry McIntosh. (See story.)

"Strange Fruit" on tour before November opening

The Los Angeles Tribune Los Angeles, Calif.
10-29-45

NEW YORK — Already in the midst of a pre-Broadway tour, "Strange Fruit," the dramatization of the best-selling Lillian Smith novel of the same name will open here the week of Nov. 11. The theatre and the exact opening date are not yet determined, it was announced.

The play was unveiled Saturday, Oct. 13, at His Majesty's Theatre in Montreal. It played Montreal 7 days, and moved on to Toronto, where it played a week. Two weeks are scheduled in Boston at the Plymouth theatre.

The drama has a cast of 35 and is directed by Jose Ferrer, renowned actor. George Jenkins has designed and lighted the 10 settings of the production. Costumes are by Patricia Montgomery.

In an interview with a reporter from the Michigan Chronicle (weekly) just before the "Strange Fruit" cast left for an opening in Montreal, Miss White professed understanding and sympathy for the role of the well educated colored girl who loves a white weakling in the Deep South.

"I feel Nonnie is a very complex part, but I feel very close to her," Miss White said. "It is an emotional closeness, as well as intellectual. I was terribly anxious to have the part . . . I can't think of anything I'd rather do less than cast a slur on educated Negro womanhood. I think in the theatre, as in all the arts, we have got to reach the point where we have the ability to see a given character as representative of himself alone and not representative of a race, sex, or class.

"I do hope that the general impression left with the audience for Nonnie is one of strength, loyalty and womanliness. She should be the kind whose strength overcomes race. The fellow playing Tracy (the white man who debases Nonnie and then returns to his own woman) and I see eye on it and in our love scenes we want to play it as a human problem and show that it would be the same if it were a Jew or Gentile, a Catholic and a Protestant, or red-blue." 10-29-45

Miss White said: "I want very much to play with sensitiveness but without any suggestion of vagueness. I don't think you ever care about a character that is fey and withdrawn. I'd like to play her to show her sensitive qualities, but not that she is daft."

"Strange Fruit" to Be at Royale

New York Times

Our crystal globe is playing tricks on us. Previously it lead us to believe that "Strange Fruit" was expected at the Cort. After a vigorous polishing of the globe we peered into it once more and learned that the Royale will receive the offering on Nov. 29, provided the stage depth is twenty-nine feet. The similarity in figures must be a coincidence. 11-12-45

Jane White talks about "Nonnie"

The Los Angeles Tribune
Los Angeles, California

NEW YORK — Jane White, attractive young daughter of NAACP chieftain Walter White, who has already opened in the 'hinterlands' with the play "Strange Fruit," wants to bring to Broadway an interpretation of the role of Nonnie that reveals the basic problem of the play as "human," rather than racial.

'Strange Fruit' Has Its Opening in Philadelphia

Daily Worker N.Y., N.Y.
11-20-45

By SAMUEL PUTNAM

PHILADELPHIA.—Following the example of **Deep Are the Roots**, Lillian Smith's own dramatic version of her much discussed novel, **Strange Fruit**, opened last week in this city. Staged and directed by Jose Ferrer, the Smith play naturally aroused a good deal of interest on the part of theatre - goers, while it led to decidedly mixed reactions on the part of reviewers.

It was one of the most memorable evenings in the theatre that this writer has ever experienced, with the play itself as Miss Smith with the collaboration of Esther Smith has fashioned it, the acting, the staging, and the unusual sets by George Jenkins all going to form a beautiful blend of poetry and throat-tightening drama that held and in the end moved an extremely critical —and in part, perhaps, hostile—first night audience in spite of itself.

There was drama in that audience, drama that overflowed into the lobby and the street outside during the intermission and after the play. One caught it in the tag-end of a conversation, a look, a gesture, a heated discussion here and there. What was happening was that Americans—and Philadelphians in particular, residents of a city that is historically a middle-ground between north and south—having come to a playhouse to see make-believe, were finding themselves, instead, confronted with life, with one of their country's most agonizing social problems. And some of them, possibly many, did not like it any too well.

INTENSE ACTION

Not a few, it may be, had been attracted by the publicity given the book on account of its banning by the Boston censors. If so, they were destined to be disappointed; for the stage version has no enticements of this kind to offer, and the result was that those who came to be titilated or to satisfy their curiosity were left with an unpleasant feeling of social guilt forced upon them by the cumulative intensity of the action. 11-20-45

The full-house that packed the orchestra for the opening was, certainly, anything but a typical first night crowd. The Main Line with its white ties and sables was conspicuously absent, and the orchestra chairs were gratifyingly filled with an admixture of Negroes and whites, with many men in uniform among those present.

As for the reviewers, one of them at least, R. E. P. Sensenderfer of the **Evening Bulletin**, expressed a doubt as to the propriety of putting such subject-matter on the stage, a subject-matter which he characterized as "inflammatory" and "in dramatic form . . . even more inciting."

Writing in the **Philadelphia Inquirer**, Linton Martin saw the piece as "dramatic dynamite." His opinion, however, was that the author, "in her zeal to crowd too much of the detail, and too many of the characters of the story, on the stage . . . has produced a play that is sprawling, diffuse, cluttered, and clumsy"; he thought that the plot had been "dissipated to a degree

LILLIAN SMITH

by the treatment" and that "the playwright's preoccupation with minor matters distorts the play's qualities of proportion and perspective." 11-20-45

The "liberal" **Philadelphia Record's** Edwin H. Schloss seemed a bit disappointed at the absence of "four-letter words" and decided that the production was "weak and sprawling." "Another case of a good book gone wrong behind footlights. In transcribing the story to the stage, scant sense of the theatre has been invoked. The force of the story . . . is lost in a welter of novelistic detail."

All of which merely goes to show that Philadelphia's professional play-reviewers—and there is, I can assure you, no James Gibbons Huneker among them—were almost if not quite as dazed as was that first night audience. Could it be that they, too, were feeling the twinges of an uncomfortably stirring social conscience?

Reviewers Score New Version Of Bard's Play

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

BY IZZY

NEW YORK—Last Thursday night, Margaret Webster brought her second modernized version of a Shakespearean drama to a Broadway theatre although this time it was a comedy, "The Tempest," rather than the tragedies of Othello, which was presented. In each case, there has been a colored and a white star and in each case much of the uninteresting and dull lines of the Bard's have been deleted. But this newcomer to the Broadway scene did not fare nearly so well as its predecessor insofar as critics and audience reaction was concerned.

"The Tempest" is generally conceded to be the last play written by the Bard of Avon, and in many instances has been called his least interesting work. At any rate it is one of the lesser known of his plays.

Burton Rascoe of the World Telegram had this to say: "Margaret Webster deserves a medal for bravery. She has dared to put on, in these times, a production of 'The Tempest'—the most insubstantial and poetic of Shakespeare's plays—and with an unerring instinct for showmanship, has co-starred Vera Zorina (a ballet dancer) as Ariel, and Canada Lee (a Negro actor who rose to fame as Bigger Thomas in 'Native Son') as Caliban. Almost anybody might imagine that Mr. Lee would make a fine Caliban, but it takes a real genius like Miss Webster to imagine that Miss Zorina would make a fine Ariel and that between the two of them—plus a good production—they would make even 'The Tempest' acceptable Broadway fare in a season of stiff competition on the part of numerous first-rate, modern plays.

"I suspect Mr. Lee stood before the cage of Gargantua in Ringling Brothers' circus, studying Gargantua's postures and grunts and breathing sounds, in preparation for his role as Caliban, for in wondrous costume he was very like Gargantua last night—an articulate Gargantua to be sure—and Mr. Lee's diction is clear, resonant, for Miss Webster rightly insists that Shakespeare's lines shouldn't all sound like Gabriel Heatter. Caliban's lines last night sounded very much like Canada Lee's, which I suppose they should sound if you are going to modernize Shakespeare."

John Chapman of the Daily News said: "Canada Lee's portrayal of the monster Caliban is one by which I shall measure all other readings in the years that are left. It is most beautifully spoken; it is at once fearsome and touching. It is one more evidence that Mr. Lee is a thoughtful, ambitious and resourceful actor."

Robert Garland of the Journal-American said: "Canada Lee, camouflaged as the hideous and unhappy Caliban, looks more like a bush walking than anything I can think of. His makeup, I feel, is unfortunate. Anyway, he's too forthright an actor to be assigned to a role that calls for grunts rather than acting.

"Cheryl Crawford has shown courage, imagination and admiration for the theatregoing public in producing 'The Tempest' and bringing it to Broadway. She, with Margaret Webster's stalwart assistance, has endowed the offering with a good deal more than William Shakespeare did. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. But I'm not going back again, either!"

Prospero and Caliban
The New York Times

New York, New York 11-11-45

Eileen Darby—Graphic House

Arnold Moss, the deposed duke, and Canada Lee in "The Tempest," which begins a return engagement at the City Center tomorrow.

TEMPEST' RETURNS AT POPULAR PRICES

New York Times

Margaret Webster Version to Open at City Center Tonight

—Harry Brown Play Due

New York, N.Y.

By SAM ZOLOTOW

Whatever the attraction at the commodious City Center, prices at the municipally operated house are within the means of everyone. Basically, that seems to be as logical a method as any for the development of a large clientele. Broadway, please note! For the limited run there of "The Tempest," commencing at 8:30 tonight, the scale for all performances ranges from 90 cents upward to $2.40. On view will be the Margaret Webster interpretation as sponsored by Cheryl Crawford, with Vera Zorina, Canada Lee and Arnold Moss starred and Benny Baker featured. This will be in the nature of a repeat visit, the Bard's fantasy having been performed for 101 times locally early this year. The hinterland, however, was not that hospitable. 11-12-45

Incidentally, two-thirds of $300,000 required to launch the American Repertory Theatre, of which Miss Crawford is one of the founders, has been subscribed.

Booked for the Lyceum is "A Sound of Hunting," opening Wednesday night, Nov. 21. It will mark the first Broadway play for its author, Harry Brown, who reaped a measure of fame with two books, and for its producer, Irving L. Jacobs, who has been having quite a tussle with scripts over a number of years. The leading role will be enacted by Sam Levene in an all-male cast of twelve, directed by Anthony Brown, who staged "Tobacco Road." By the way, the two Browns are not related. 11-12-45

Dec. 26 has been reserved for the local opening of "Pygmalion," in which Gertrude Lawrence and Raymond Massey will share stellar honors. Owing to the delay in the arrival of the director, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, rehearsals will get under way today.

Authors Explain 'Deep Are the Roots'

The Afro-American Baltimore Md.

Call Racial Issue Most Important Post-War Problem

INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE—*Collaborators on hit play deny advocating interracial marriage, say aim was to show audiences that the issue is a personal one which cannot be evaded.*

11-17-45

Former newsmen, James Gow and Arnaud d'Usseau worked on script of successful play for a year and a half while in the Army, and say that only a few changes were made in the original of the play, sold out for four weeks in advance. Authors of "Tomorrow the World," stage and screen hit, the writers consider themselves only as braver than others who feel the same way. A previous play based on the life of John Brown, famous abolitionist, was rejected earlier in Hollywood.

By RICHARD R. DIER

NEW YORK—James Gow and Arnaud d'Usseau, white authors of the most courageous and controversial interracial play ever to come to Broadway, "Dep Are the Roots," told the AFRO in an exclusive interview this week that they chose the theme because "we figured the most important problem in post-war America would be the racial question, which was not sold through military victory. Besides, we wanted to do something exciting and interesting and of a post-war nature."

"If you are an alert and alive person, you become aware of racial friction, and if you live in America, you are aware of it daily," explained Gow. 11-17-45

Just Went Ahead

"We don't deserve any particular credit, because many people feel the same way we do about it, except that we went ahead and wrote it up.

"People everywhere are aware of contradictions in American life, and this is brought out by the audience reaction to the play and its successful receival on Broadway."

The story is that of a young, colored, intelligent Army lieutenant who returns to his home in the South as a war hero and of the difficulties he encounters when he tries to reap the rewards of democracy, for which he fought.

Planned in Army

Seats are sold out more than four weeks in advance, it is reported, and the play is expected to run for a long time, perhaps matching or surpassing the record run of "Anna Lucasta."

The authors explained that they worked on the script for a year and a half while both were in the Army, stationed in the United States.

Gow was discharged from the service on Sept. 2, and d'Usseau, who is still in uniform, expects to get his release in March.

They completed the play last June and went into rehearsal in August, aiming for early Fall production. 11-19-45

No Pressure from Producers

Asked whether there were any important changes made from the original script, Gow said, "There were no changes made during rehearsal that we did not approve of. Naturally, minor changes had to be made along the way."

They pointed out that they received no pressure from the producers, Kermit Bloomgarden and George Heller, on making any changes from the original. The final decision was left to them.

Regarding the problems encountered in getting such a powerful anti-jim crow play produced, Gow declared that although three or four producers rejected it for various reasons, they had less trouble than they had anticipated.

Cast Commended

"We held out for immediate production," he continued. "Some producers wanted to take a six-months option on it, which we declined. Others just wouldn't meet our conditions.

"When we took the play to Bloomgarden and Heller, who met not difficulties at all," he added and both authors agreed that the producers and cast had given splendid co-operation. 11-17-45

Gordon Heath, who plays the role of "Lt. Brett Charles," the returning war hero, was selected over several other applicants for the part because of his acting ability. 11-19-45

Anonymous Critics

Regarding criticism, they said that they have received many unsigned letters since the play opened, attacking them for bringing the racial issue to the forefront.

Other letters, they add, just indicate that the writers are disturbed about the situation and want to know why they went into the colored question so deeply. One Southern woman said that she wanted to "protect her blue blood," they revealed.

Some playgoers, and critics, too, have said that the question of interracial marriage should never have been injected into the play and that it could have been very well successful without it.

Unable to Evade Issue

Gow and d'Usseau, on the other hand, point out that this issue is an everyday problem and that you just can't take the sex question and throw it out of the window.

The authors state that nowhere in the play have they advocated interracial marriage. What they aimed at, they insist, was showing the audience that that was purely a personal matter and completely up to the individual to decide.

As for Lt. Brett Charles's falling in love with the younger daughter of a reactionary Senator, that was natural and inescapable.

It happened and—in the opinion of the authors—the issue had to be faced and not run away from.

Authors of Previous Hit

Gow and d'Usseau have been working together for more than five years. "Deep Are the Roots" is their third play, one of the others being the highly successful, "Tomorrow the World," which was a stage and screen hit. 11-17-45

They have also done many serious scripts for the movies, and some time ago, they wrote a screen play about John Brown, the famed abolitionist, which was never considered in Hollywood.

Gow worked for the old New York World and d'Usseau was associated with the United Press in Arizona before partnership. They have also collaborated in Hollywood. Both are married, neither having children.

THE PLAY

New York Times

'The Tempest' Returns

11-19-45

The City Center's drama season opened belatedly last evening, when the Margaret Webster production of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" came back to town after wandering along the road. When it was here earlier in the year the usual Broadway prices prevailed; now they go down from a top rate of $2.40. The production still is Shakespeare in popular form, and it still has the three leading players of last Winter—Vera Zorina as Ariel, Canada Lee as Caliban, Arnold Moss as Prospero. N. Y.

The road, or something else taking place between last January and now, appears to have broadened the comedy side of "The Tempest" from a state which was rather broad at the start. In place of the Czech comedians, Voskovec and Warich, the return now gives Wallace Acton and Benny Baker as jester and butler; they play a bit like Olsen and Johnson. Bram Nossen is the new Alonzo, Robert Harrison is Gonzalo and Diana Sinclair has replaced Frances Heflin as Miranda. Not all of the minor parts are played as well as they once were, but the important three main ones seem unchanged. The production remains Shakespeare in the modern manner.

L. N.

88a-1945 Theatre- Dramatic- Canada Lee

HEADLINES Footlights

By GORDON HEATH People's Voice N.Y., N.Y.

(Gordon Heath is an articulate young man with a consuming interest in the theatre. He is actively associated with the American Negro theatre. On hearing that the "Tempest" was opening on Broadway he called and said he'd like to set down his reactions to it in black and white. Thinking that you perhaps might like to get more than one impression of the Shakespearean work we have turned over this space to Mr. Heath in which to project his evaluation of the Broadway hit. It follows herewith: —Bostic) 2-3-45

THE TEMPEST, by one William Shakespeare, is a peg from which to hang a production, or perhaps from which to hang oneself if the production does not come off. Certainly it is most demanding of the ingenuity and artifices the modern theatre has at its command.

The story lends itself to many treatments: it tells how Prospero, a man of intellect, is forced from his throne by a treacherous brother, and how he is cast upon an island with his infant daughter. He learns the magic secrets of the isle and becomes a great enchanter. Long after, his enemies are delivered into his hands but in final clearsightedness he forgives them all and renounces both revenge and magic. You may consider it a fairy tale or an allegory or a morality play or what you will.

Cheryl Crawford and Margaret Webster have lavished invention and care on this new production that stars Canada Lee and Vera Zorina. In many departments the magic has been preserved and heightened: the rocky set with its stretching towers and step levels is lit with extraordinary effectiveness. The score by David Diamond is haunting and whimsical. The revolving stage and the many cuts and transpositions in the text have speeded the flow of the play and the whole production plan, including the heavy emphasis on clowning, reflects Miss Webster's straight-line approach.

Let it be said immediately that Mr. Lee's role does honor to him and he to it. He is presented as a co-star and he is thoroughly integrated into the production. His enormous controlled vitality fills and often dominates the stage. As the monster of the isle he creates a kind of pity for himself and in one beautifully spoken passage he endows Caliban with a faint wistfulness that is both unexpected and touching. It is not an easy matter to be both heavy-tongued and intelligible, grotesque and pitiable, but Mr. Lee manages a workable compromise. Only occasionally as in "first" and "curse" does the diction seem incongruous. His costume does not suggest that he is "misshapen" and although his facial make-up is frightening enough there is perhaps too much grace and not enough deformity coming through. There is also a tendency in Mr. Lee's delivery to be emphatic rather than sinister, when character is sacrificed to energy. The total effect, the shambling, grunting, treacherous Caliban that emerges, is very impressive, and the first-night audience made no bones about their approval of it and Canada Lee.

Vera Zorina, as Ariel, the spirit employed by Prospero, brought, as you would expect, her sense of movement and pattern to the part—danced it, in fact—but spoke and sang not as well as she moved, since her voice lacks the kind of variation and inflection that her body demonstrates wordlessly. There was a nice feeling of mischief and airiness that made her Ariel a fetching creation.

Arnold Moss, a sonorous Prospero, suggested that inward turning of the mind in solitude that expresses itself in strange and capricious humors and his reading of the transposed "Our revels now are ended" speech was nobly done. 2-3-45

The charmingly stalwart Ferdinand, the accented Stephano and Trinculo, the benign Gonzalo and the conspirators, Antonio and Sebastian, made good company for the stars. Only Frances Heffin, as Miranda, seemed pallied and insensitive.

The incidental poetry of groupings, details of lighting, the musical comment on the play's progress, and the delicate enchantment it often captures make a good evening in the theatre. I think you will enjoy yourself at "The Tempest." I did. It is a warming show and a good one.

Shakespeare With a Touch of Modernity:

Canada Lee's Caliban Role Helps Make Tempest Hit

People's Voice N.Y., N.Y. 2-3-45

For the second time this season I have seen Mr. Lionel Canageta in a role on Broadway in which he gets the shabby end of the stick. My conclusion after seeing him this second time is that Mr. Canageta (or Canada Lee as you know him professionally) is never so superb as when he is getting pushed around for one reason or another; is aware of the injustices being heaped upon him and accordingly, engenders mounting degrees of indignation, anger and bitterness. It was true of "Bigger Thomas" in *Native Son*. It was true of the sailor in *Anna Lucasta* and now this same quality gives definition and substance to his portrayal of the role of *Caliban* in the Cheryl Crawford-Margaret Webster production of the *Tempest*, which opened at the Alvin theatre last Thursday night.

LEE SUBSTITUTES 2-3-45

Mr. Lee has disdained the traditional meeker approach to the role of the not too belligerent inhabitant of the island and in its place has substituted a lithe, virulent, aggressive creation that seems inspired by Mr. John Ringling North's Gargantua, but a Gargantua that moves about with an awkward gracefulness and a complete awareness of what is happening in the little world about him.

Elsewhere on this page, guest writer Gordon Heath refreshes your mind with a brief resume of the story which goes to make up the whimsical fantasy that is the *Tempest*, so let me try to reveal some of the subtle tricks used by the imaginative Miss Webster, to make this wholly inviting and exhilarating theatre DESPITE the fact that it is Shakespeare.

To begin with the use of ballerina Vera Zorina to float—not walk—on and off the stage keeps the illusion of fantasy ever alive. Somehow you can't project the idea of concrete substance with a sprite and that's just what Miss Zorina is in this production and I'm convinced it was so directed intentionally. Maybe she doesn't sing too well but who cares as long as that figure and those graceful ballet movements are on display.

VERBOSITY SHAVED

One of the difficulties of making the Avon Bard enjoyable is the verbosity of his speeches. Attempting to project same when it takes the form of poetry is an almost impossible task. So the magnificent tonal quality of Arnold Moss' voice is played for all it's worth but with the speeches getting quite a job from the pruning knife. Mr. Moss is Prospero. 2-3-45

Add a lilting song and the romance between Miranda (Frances Heflin) and Ferdinand (Vito Christi) might be transplanted from *Bloomer Girl*, it's that modern.

If you gather from the above that we enjoyed this adventure in modernized, Broadwayized Shakespeare immensely you're absolutely right. It's imaginative and entertaining theatre. There are technical lapses to be sure but the overall is fun. I think you'll find it likewise. —Joe Bostic.

Lee Sees Caliban 'Rebellious Guy'

Norfolk Journal & Guide-Va. 2-3-45

By PAUL DANIEL DAVIS

BOSTON, Mass.—(ANP)—Unquestionably a play-going experience that will be remembered by all for many years, Margaret Webster's production of "The Tempest," achieves magnificent effects of gravity, and spectacle. Shakespeare's great comedy offers controversial problems in staging and interpretation; the current effort has successfully surmounted them with polish and understanding, for a result that will probably outrank "Othello" in popular appeal. 2-3-45

By casting Canada Lee in the debasing role of Caliban, Miss Webster has invited the criticism of all who profess an important interest in the race question. The choice of a Negro for the role of the misshapen monster, half-human and servile, suggests sinister implications.

Lee, however, said during a backstage interview that he has attempted to play down all social connotations in his part, and that he feels genuinely honored to follow in the footsteps of Sir Herbert Tree and other English actors who have played Caliban.

SEES VIEW OF CALIBAN

"This Caliban's rebellious guy, and that's the idea people must get. I thought I could get away from the Negro angle of it. I hoped I could open up things for the Negro never opened up before," remarked Lee. 2-3-45

Canada Lee's fiery Caliban is brilliant. When Lee cries, "Ban, Ban, Caliban, got a new master, got a new man." Act II reaches a moment of dynamic crescendo.

Arnold Moss is an impressive Prospere with a voice that gives force and significance to some of Shakespeare's most moving poetry. Frances Heflin portrays Miranda with an air of innocent wonder that is beautiful.

Ballet is not out of place in "The Tempest" and Vera Zorina's Ariol has exceptional grace, if not marked dramatic excellence.

A stylized setting by Eva La Gallienne presents the entire island scene on one revolving stage and makes the most of the three unities in the play. Miss Webster has again reached a new height in the presentation of Shakespearean drama.

CRITICAL and AMUSEMENTS

Kronenberger
Going to Theater

'The Tempest' P.M. 2-4-45

Although I was cool toward certain aspects of the current *Tempest*, I hope my review made clear that this was a production which every lover of Shakespeare would want to see. For Margaret Webster has fashioned as lucid and compact a playing version as seems possible: her *Tempest*, indeed, makes better theater than Shakespeare's. It always lets you know what is happening, it nearly always holds your interest, it has a lively flow and an impressive finale. To achieve so much with a play whose dramaturgy is wobbly, whose plot is unexciting, whose minor characters are tiresome, and whose atmosphere is unworldly and supernatural is to prove once again how really skilful a director and woman of the theater Margaret Webster is.

All the same—and I have not thrown roses at Miss Webster merely as a preamble to throwing cabbages after them—this seems to me a disappointing as well as stimulating *Tempest*; a *Tempest* you might perhaps describe as having hit the wrong bull's-eye. For, in the final reckoning, it is a *Tempest* that has not sufficiently communicated the most important and delightful thing in the play—its magic, its poetry (a poetry, of course, of mood as well as language). For this fantastic, self-indulgent farewell to the theater of a Shakespeare for whom language had come to mean more than life, is really of no account as playwriting—as well value the *Urn Burial* for its scientific facts. *The Tempest* is a curious mixture of beauty and boredom; and in producing it, the real point is not so much to mitigate the boredom as to reveal the beauty. It might be argued, I admit, that in hewing (as Miss Webster has done) to a line, in making something solid of a work so dangerously fluid, you fall short in the least calamitous way. Certainly the risks of proceeding in an opposite direction—of trying to make pure poetry palpable in the theater, of trying to "materialize" the magic and to triumph through mood rather than movement—are infinitely greater risks.

Arnold Moss (Prospero) and Frances Heflin (Miranda) in a scene from Shakespeare's *Tempest* at the Alvin. *Graphic House Photo*

N.Y., N.Y.

The poetry could pass over into oddity and absurdity; the magic could seem mere hocus-pocus, and the mood evoke not glamor but monotony. But while I should be the first to grant the magnitude of those risks, I still insist that in any ideal sense they are the only ones worth taking. 2-4-45

Otherwise—as this production, so satisfactory on its own terms, proves—values will have been turned around, small things looming big and big things small. It is a little as though an opera were acted up to the hilt, but indifferently sung. And *The Tempest* needs people who can do justice to its verse as much as an opera needs people who can do justice to its arias. Only Arnold Moss, as Prospero, was up to that assignment; though in her intelligence and sensibility Frances Heflin came close—what she still lacks is a sense of style. As Caliban, Canada Lee conveyed only ugliness—not the poetry of ugliness; came through as a generic brute—not a unique one. As Ariel, Zorina sometimes got prettiness into her lines, but never poetry; and though graceful, seemed a child of the snow rather than the sun. 2-4-45

In Shakespeare's greatest work, though the ability to read his verse is still very important, it is not crucial. Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, Iago, Falstaff, Hamlet are colossal human beings; and how they act is, in the end, of even greater moment than how they speak. But aside from Caliban, and possibly Prospero (who must at least possess great authority) there are no important "acting" roles in *The Tempest;* what the play calls for is great readings of intermittent great verse. 2-4-45

As for the poetic mood that, over and above its poetic utterance, an ideal *Tempest* must achieve, the formula for achieving it is certainly not easy, and I cannot pretend to possess it. But I would suspect that it might lie in giving *The Tempest* something of the quality of a ballet—with a ballet's capacity to create and sustain an atmosphere, to evoke an essence, to stylize rather than imitate, to weave a pattern rather than stress a plot. In any case, that mood is not induced by emphasizing *The Tempest's* bores and buffoons, even when they display more force and humor than their roles lead you to expect. It is perfectly true that Shakespeare invented all these Alonsos and Stephanos, these Trinculos and Sebastians; true that they *are* substantial part of his play. In general, it is not wise to consider yourself smarter than Shakespeare. But with these folk, I can only feel that Shakespeare cared as little about them as we do; it was Ariel's songs that mattered to him, and Prospero's speeches, and the imprecations and curses of Caliban.

—Louis Kronenberger.

Canada Lee Opens In New York As 'Tempest's' Caliban

Norfolk Journal & Guide 2-3-45

NEW YORK—(ANP)—A new opening at Alvin Theatre last week of "The Tempest," William Shakespeare's fantasy, offers the unique aspect of a Negro, for the first time, playing the part of Caliban. Canada Lee stars in the Caliban role while Vera Zorina, the famous dancer, co-stars as Ariol.

"I think Cheryl Crawford and Margaret Webster deserve a lot of credit for offering me the chance to do Caliban," Canada said. "I am proud to do the part," he continued. "You see, Caliban is a slave who absolutely rebels against servitude, slavery and all the things people are fighting against today to make this a better world."

2-3-45

"No Negro who comes to see "The Tempest" will ever have to feel ashamed or self conscious as I have been conscious of the way Negroes have been treated on our stage and screen. It's a play Negroes can come to and feel good about. No 'shine' or 'eight ball' stuff here. I'm going to give it the very best that's in me."

The show opened Thursday.

Back On B'way

N.Y. Amsterdam News 1-27-45

N.Y., N.Y.

CANADA LEE

OPENING at the Alvin Theatre Thursday evening, Canada Lee, co-starred with Vera Zorina opened in "The Tempest" at which time both players had their first opportunity to essay Shakespearan roles. New York critics review the production this week, while the Amsterdam News review appeared in last week's issue of the newspaper.

Kronenberger
City Is Host To Shakespeare

PM N.Y., N.Y. 11-14-45

Reprinted from Yesterday's Late Edition

After some months of travel, Margaret Webster's production of *The Tempest* has come back to town for two weeks at the City Center. If you didn't see the last play Shakespeare wrote when it was here last Winter, better see it now, or run the risk of waiting 25 or 30 years for another crack at it. Miss Webster's version, furthermore, remains as brisk theater as *The Tempest* is ever likely to be. It gets what fun it can from the comedy scenes, and what straightforwardness it can from the plot. Last night, *The Tempest* was being played pretty broadly—as most shows tend to be played after serenading the hinterland. But it made its points and got its laughs; and if it seemed even less poetic and evocative than it did last Winter, let us bow to Emerson's Law of Compensation.

Last night, as last Winter, Arnold Moss walked off with the acting honors—though he, too, has broadened his style and (doubtless aware of the cavernous aspects of the Center) was shouting a little. Zorina, as Ariel, still leaves me cold; Canada Lee has improved as Caliban. There are some new faces in the cast: Diana Sinclair, who looks charming as Miranda, but falls far short of Frances Heflin in performance; Albert Hachmeister, who makes a pleasant Ferdinand; and Benny Baker and Wallace Acton, who clown away as Stephano and Trinculo. These last two roles still seem to me a pure act of malice, on Shakespeare's part, toward audiences; but last night's onlookers seemed to be finding them funny.

—Louis Kronenberger

Miss Webster's 'Tempest'

Daily Worker N.Y. 2-1-45

An Engaging Fantasy

THE TEMPEST, a revival of the play by William Shakespeare, directed by Margaret Webster, settings and costumes by Motley, music by David Diamond, presented by Cheryl Crawford at the Alvin Theater with the following cast:

Shipmaster .....Joseph Hardy
Boatswain .....Steven Elliott
Alonso, King of Naples.....Philip Huston
Gonzalo .....Paul Leyssac
Antonio, brother to Prospero.Berry Kroeger
Sebastian, brother to Alonso
Eugene Stuckmann
Prospero .....Arnold Moss
Miranda, his daughter.....Frances Heflin
Ariel .....Vera Zorina
Caliban .....Canada Lee
Ferdinand, Prince of Naples...Vito Christi
Adrian, a lord.....Jack Bostick
Trinculo, a jester.....George Voskovec
Stephano, a butler.....Jan Werich

Margaret Webster has again brought us a skilful and imaginative production of Shakespeare. Her version of Othello, with Paul Robeson, continues to make theater history on a nationwide tour. And now Miss Webster attractively revives Shakespeare's rarely performed last play, The Tempest. 2-1-45

This cloud-capped fantasy is not another Othello, to be sure. The Tempest has neither the power of Shakespearean tragedy nor the robust comic spirit of a play like Twelfth Night. A poetic pageant that dissolves all conflicts with a magic wand, it depends for its primary efforts on lyrical enchantment, on atmosphere rather than on characterization.

Miss Webster has ingeniously heightened the theatrical values of the play by accepting fully the premise of fantasy. Prospero performs miracles with magic cloak and wand on a revolving stage that is exquisitely designed and lighted. Ariel is gracefully pictured as a ballet dancer; Caliban as a snarling, hideously deformed monster quite out of this world; Miranda as a pure romantic image. And the intoxicating sounds of the enchanted island contribute to a mood in which one's prosaic disbelief is willingly suspended.

By frankly stressing the fabulous, and by making the most of the comic interplay between Caliban and the drunken sailors, the production nearly succeeds in concealing the sagging portions that have to do with Prospero's enemies whom this exiled Duke of Milan shipwrecks and then forgives quite unconvincingly. 2-1-45

Because The Tempest is played primarily as spectacle, the archaic George Jean Nathan shouts "Hokum!" and rightly predicts that the "groundlings" will enjoy it. But Miss Webster seems justified in her assumption that Shakespeare is to be enjoyed and not wrapped in mothballs.

Arnold Moss as Prospero dominates the play in an outstanding performance which conveys the dignity, learning and goodness of the exiled Duke. He is at once a persuasive sorcerer and a gentle human being. A commanding figure, he speaks his lines with admirable clarity and intelligence.

As a mercurial, impish Ariel, Vera Zorina is graceful and charming in a highly stylized role.

While he portrays Caliban with vigor, Canada Lee does not in this role have sufficient opportunity to explore his very considerable talent as an actor. 2-1-45

It is infuriating, incidentally, to find Otis L. Guernsey of the Herald-Tribune writing that "Caliban is a perfect role for a Negro." Guernsey's sentence suggests how hazardous it is to set up an identification between a Negro actor and Caliban, for such an identification may serve to endorse the stupid stereotypes about the "lumpish," "brutal," "rapist" Negro. The part was not written for a black man, and it should not be regarded by any intelligent theatergoer as a "black man's part," even though it happens in this particular production to be played by a very gifted Negro actor.

An exceedingly successful aspect of the production is the comic acting of two Czechs, Voskovec and Werich, famous clowns in their own country. As Trinculo and Stephano they are terribly funny.

Frances Heflin is the lovely Miranda and Vito Christ her lovesick prince Ferdinand. The costumes and settings are designed by Motley. The appropriate original score is by David Diamond.

It is a captivating, even if not profound Tempest, that Margaret Webster has revived. You may chalk up another hit for an uncommonly successful playwright.

Canada Lee Out of "Lucasta"

New York Times

Borrowed from "Anna Lucasta" to portray Caliban in "The Tempest," which closed last Saturday, Canada Lee is not returning to the first-named play, it became known yesterday. A settlement of his lucrative run-of-the-play contract for "Lucasta," which expires at the end of next month, will be made. Mr. Lee had intended to resume his role on May 14. John Tate is appearing in it now.

VERA ZORINA

'THE TEMPEST'

Some Notes on Margaret Webster's Latest Production of Shakespeare

New York Times 2-4-45

By LEWIS NICHOLS

THE producers of Shakespearean revivals are a brave lot. Sometimes they are even called foolhardy, like flagpole sitters and those who go over Niagara Falls in barrels. If not actually careless of their persons and reputations, they certainly are not unduly careful. Offering Shakespeare in this fifth decade of the twentieth century is to court sudden disaster on as many counts as the theatre conveniently can contrive. Too many people know all about the Bard. Too many are authorities on Shakespeare. Some of them have college degrees to prove it; some have books in the library; some a few old programs and dimming memories of the Hamlets they have seen, and the Juliets. Shakespeare is a personal matter, and in many cases the same play contains both one man's meat and his poison.

On to Disaster 2-4-45

The producer of Shakespeare starts out with the assumption that every man's hand probably will be against him. That section of the public which stresses the poetry of Shakespeare will gnash its teeth at any reading of lines which does not accent the cadences. Other members of the audience—students of stagecraft, these—will writhe in injury if there is any change in the traditional "business." There will be complaints that the editing is injudicious, that speeches have been transferred from one place to another, that roles have been dropped. There even is a select—and luckily rather small—group which studies the commas and spelling of Shakespeare, and one changed comma can bring down upon the luckless producer all the heavy thunders of Jove. Every one complains about the acting as a simple matter of course. No Shakespearean production is as good as last year's. 2-4-45

Although she must be used to it by now, Margaret Webster has run into the same old trouble with the production of "The Tempest" which she has directed for Cheryl Crawford. Since it opened at the Alvin ten days ago, it has been charged with lack of attention to poetry, with too much stressing of comedy, with confusion, with bad acting. Since Shakespeare is personal, the exceptions have been in the nature of individual afterthoughts, for almost everyone is in agreement that "The Tempest," at the Alvin, is a good show. Usually discussions of that particular play begin and end with the old critical argument of whether it displays Shakespeare at his tired worst or at the height of his genius. Miss Webster at least has kept her production away from that basic, if unprovable, dispute, and has brought even the bickering up to date. 2-4-45

Modern Editing

Since Miss Webster looks on Shakespeare as a modern living this side of Ibsen, she has continued her policy of removing the Bard from the undusted part of the library. She is not afraid to change commas; her feeling toward her faith. It consists mainly in dropping the masque from the fourth act, and transferring the "such stuff as dreams are made on" speech from the end of the masque to the end of the play. There it fits beautifully; as Arnold Moss shows, Miss Zorina's Ariel is as dancer, whose Broadway past has been spent mainly in musical shows. Miss Zorina's Ariel is a roar and a bellow, the frightening crouch of a Caliban about to spring, and he gives a realistic performance. On the opening night he was tremely effective ending. In casting the parts ster has dodged the schomal Shakespearean de- The Ariel is Vera Z- dancer, whose Broadwa- has been spent mainly in musical ance. On the opening night he was players slide slowly into ows of the wings. It ma- at its best in delivering Shakespeare. The Caliban is Canada Lee, the one-time boxer and Biggers Thomas of "Native Son." He has a roar and a bellow, the frightening crouch of a Caliban about to spring, and he gives a realistic performance. On the opening night he was

a little indistinct at times; that no doubt has been corrected by now.

Prospero and Miranda

But beyond Ariel and Caliban, the hero and heroine of "The Tempest" are Mr. Moss as Prospero and Frances Heflin as Miranda. The former is tall, with a beautiful speaking voice and a manner that can change at will so as to suggest either the sorcerer or the king. Miss Heflin is poised, youthful and fresh. The two well-known Czech comedians, George Voskovec and Jan Werich, are the jester and butler, and they are quite funny even if on the stage too long now and then. The firm known as Motley has designed a simple and easily controlled setting for "The Tempest," and within that framework Miss Webster speeds the play on its way. Of course there are flaws; there never yet has been a Shakespeare revival free of them. But "The Tempest" is fine for this year.

Lee's Role in "Tempest" Is One Not to Be Ashamed of

By E. B. REA
AFRO Theatrical Editor

NEW YORK—Canada Lee, who rose to stardom in "Native Son," and now currently starring in Margaret Webster's "The Tempest," a William Shakespeare fantasy, in the role of Caliban, a monster-like creation of Shakespeare's fertile brain, has no small assignment in interpreting this role.

The presence of Mr. Lee in the play marks the first time that a colored actor has ever played a Shakespearean part on Broadway which was written for a white actor.

Lee is proud of the role, believing that it will prove a stepping stone for other young colored actors who have never had a chance to do serious drama on the big time.

Conscious of Critics

However, Mr. Lee is extremely conscious of the adverse criticism of some few persons who think that the horror-striking role of Caliban, the monster in gorilla garb, should have been sidestepped by him because Caliban is a slave. On the other hand, this reviewer thinks it's quite the reverse and that Canada Lee deserves high praise.

"I am proud to do the part," he told me backstage at the Alvin Theatre last Saturday. "You see," he continued, "Caliban is a slave who absolutely rebels against servitude, slavery and all things people are fighting against today to make this a better world."

I agreed with him when he said: "The colored persons who come to see "The Tempest" will never have to feel ashamed or self-conscious, as I have been conscious of the way colored players have been treated on our stage and screen.

No "Eight-Ball" Stuff

"It's a play they can see and feel good about. There is no 'shine' or 'eight-ball' stuff here. I'm giving it the very best that's in me. I'm trying to play down all social connotations on my part, and I feel genuinely honored to follow in the footsteps of Sir Hubert Tree and other English actors who have played Caliban."

Briefly explained, the plot concerns a banished duke of Milan, Italy, Prospero, played by Arnold Moss, who, with his daughter, Marinda (Frances Heflin), is tossed upon an island inhabited by a witch and her offspring monster, Caliban. Prospero develops great magical power and causes a ship to be wrecked with the help of his Spirit, Ariel, played by Vera Zorina.

They, too, are tossed upon the island and thrown into a state of confusion and rebellion, but after love and comedy episodes, the shipwrecked ones are forgiven for their former attitude toward Prospero.

There is a subtle vein of freedom running through the play. Caliban, who is enslaved by Prospero, thinks only in terms of destruction until he is given his freedom. "This Caliban is a rebellious guy, and that's the idea people must get," Lee said.

Democratic Cast

Speaking of members of the cast in which he is the only colored player, Mr. Lee said: "It's the most democratic bunch of players I have ever seen. I never realize that I am colored until I get outside, even though some of the players are Southerners."

In addition, Mr. Lee's understudy is a white youth, Steven Elliott.

Canada Lee's fiery Caliban is fearsome and touching. He's splendid from his opening lines when he says, "As wicked dew as ever my mother brushed with raven feathers from unwholesome fen drop on you both. A Southwest blow on ye and blister you all o'er," to the final curtain.

Lee doesn't just have a role in "The Tempest," he's part of it. His performance is void of any racial implications. He has an unmistakable gift for acting and he gives a realistic performance.

Mr. Lee, who previously appeared in the all-colored play, "Anna Lucasta," gave up his role in order to accept the part in "The Tempest," believing that it afforded him a better opportunity.

The setting of the play is on a revolving stage and has many sides and presents many places on Prospero's isle. The final fadeout at the end of the play leaves Lee, Moss and Miss Zorina on the lap of the stage, where the audience pays them a wholesome tribute.

88b-1945

SEATTLE, WASH. NORTHWESTERN
JULY 13, 1945

'HI YELLOWS' RULE ALL-NEGRO CAST IN MODERN VERSION NAUGHTY CARMEN AT METROPOLITAN AUGUST 3 TO 10

"STAND UP AND FIGHT"

Oscar Hammerstein II's streamlined Toreador Song in "Carmen" becomes a prize-fight number in Billy Rose's "Carmen Jones" which will appear at the Metropolitan opening August 3.

"Carmen Jones" will be presented at the Metropolitan for ten days, starting Friday, August 3, with matinees Saturday, August 4, and Sundays, August 5 and 12, coming direct from the Curran in San Francisco. Personnel and production are those which have been visible and audible at the Broadway, New York, for two seasons.

In keeping with the no-second-company policy of Billy Rose there will be but one organization on the tour which is scheduled to cover the United States and Canada.. If conditions abroad are propitious by the time Rose has extracted all the meat from the continental North American cocoanut the show will accept offers for Australia, South America, England and South Africa.

The company is a populous one. Some 125 are beneficiaries of the Rose payroll, including a large technical staff and an augmented orchestra under the direction of David Mordecai, in addition to the usual theatre group of musicians. The company includes in the all-Negro cast: Muriel Smith and Inez Matthews, the sopranos who alternate in the title role; Buck and Bubbles, Napoleon Reed, Le-Verne Hutcherson, Elton J. Warren, Glenn Bryant, Jack Carr, June Hawkins, Theresa Merritte, Urylee Leonardos and others.

"Carmen Jones' 'is the composite achievement of many men. The idea of colored singers and dancers in a modernized version of "Carmen" burgeoned from the fecund cerebral apparatus of the little man who thought up "Jumbo," Aquacade, Fort Worth's Casa Manana and recently the fabulous "Seven Lively Arts" at Rose's own Ziegfeld theater in New York.

Carmen Jones

Carmen Jones Journal and Celebrates Guide 2nd Birthday Norfolk, Va.

CHICAGO — (ANP) — "Carmen Jones," that phenomenal syncopated, operatic baby, whose swish through the theatrical skies has been as startling as that of a comet, started on her third year last week. Billy Rose, the impressario, ordered that a birthday party be tendered "Carmen" and her talented staff and what a party it was.

Staged at the Erlanger theatre after the show, 250 people, the stars and members of the cast, the casts of "Anna Lucasta" now playing Chicago, with colored and white members of the staff of "Dear Ruth" and the "Tempest" as well as of other plays currently in town, celebrities, operatic and theatrical, all crowded onto the stage and out into the auditorium to extend felicitations and best wishes to Carmen, her actors, producer, staff and, as all of them said, to hope that her birthdays extend on and on. 10-27-45

With a small jazz band employed for the occasion and a tiered cake occupying the center of the stage, with all sorts of food and refreshments of every type and kind, "Carmen," truly celebrated.

"BUBBLES" M. C.

At an appropriate time in the morning, "Bubbles" of "Buck and Bubbles" who was master of ceremonies, started introducing people for extemporaneous speeches and unrehearsed routines and appearances. Among those who responded were the two Carmens, Muriel Smith and Inez Matthews; June Hawkins and Cozy Cole, Glenn Bryant, Elton Warren and Laverne Hutcherson, all of "Carmen Jones;" Hilda Simms, Earl Hyman, Sadie Browne and Frederick O'Neil, all of "Anna Lucasta;" Canada Lee, Edith Mason of operatic fame, Etta Moton, Fritzhe, the French chanteuse, Meade Lux Lewis, Giovanni Martinelli. Others seen were Mr. and Mrs. John Wildberg and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Jacobson of the managerial staff of "Lucasta," Eddie and Mrs. Mallory, Alma Hubbard and a galaxy of white and colored news columnists, critics and commentators.

"Carmen Jones" 1st violinist Los Angeles Tribune - Calif starts on concert tour

NEW YORK—The most promising Negro violinist in the country, Everett Lee, who attracted attention as concert master with the "Carmen Jones" orchestra, is about to set out on a concert tour.

Young Lee, a Clevelander, has gone farther on Broadway than any other Negro violinist. He now wants to try his luck as a concert violinist, just to see how good he really is. 8-20-45

Born in Cleveland, Lee began the study of the violin at the age of five. Thereafter, he was soloist and often conductor of every orchestra in Cleveland from the symphony orchestra of the Cleveland Institute of Music, from which he was graduated, to the Cleveland Philharmonic where he attracted the attention of Arturo Rodzinski, who advised him to study conducting as well as the violin. 8-20-45

Before the close of the Broadway run of "Carmen," young Lee was auditioned by Leopold Stokowski. For the test he soloed with the orchestra, playing the Vivaldi D major concerto. Stokowski reportedly had high praise for him.

His first Broadway engagement was also a concert mastership. He was first violinist with the orchestra for Leonard Bernstein's "On the Town."

Married to a musician, Lee is the proud father of a baby son. His wife is the former Sylvia Olden, a pianist who toured one season with Paul Robeson. She will accompany him on the tour.

"Carmen Jones" Premiere In Chicago Marks End Of Cross Country Tour

The New York Age
New York, New York 9-22-45

The Chicago premiere of "Carmen Jones" August 25th, marked the end of a swift trip to the Coast and return. Nighty-six performances were given in a span of 86 days to a gross — after taxes— of $464,377.02. The largest week was garnered at Philharmonic Auditorium, Los Angeles, when $49,819 was recorded. Sacramento accounted for the top single performance with $9315. Before reaching Chicago $22,318 was the take in three nights and a matinee at St. Paul.

Despite transportation stringency no performances were lost on the junket which included El Paso, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Joes, Sacramento, Stockton, Seattle, Vancouver, Yakima, Spokane and St. Paul. Eastern key cities with three exceptions have not yet been visited by the outfit.

There may be a second company of "Carmen Jones" after all. A few months ago Billy Rose vowed that the original troupe would not be duplicated. Now that the war is over, transportation and manpower conditions eased, fabricating another cast appears less difficult.

In Chicago for the premiere Rose, Oscar Hammerstein II, Hassard Short and Charles Friedman mulled the idea of a replica when that production goes to London in the spring.

It had been the original intention of sending the present company on tour of the United States and Canada at the end of its Chicago run. Only New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and east of the Rocky Mountains have previously seen the show. Australia, South Africa and South America have also been ogling the tempestuous gal from south of Cairo.

9-22-45

Rose figures that if he attempted to fill all demands with the one outfit his tenors would be better fitted to play De Lawd in "Green Pastures" than the youthful Joe with whom Carmen raises so much hob, by the time the last booking had been played.

Golden Gate Quartette Will Take Part in Ben Davis Election Show

By ANN RIVINGTON

The Golden Gate Quartet who make a hush fall over sophisticated night-club audiences with their Negro work-songs and spirituals, will sing for Ben Davis and you on Oct. 28. These four young singers, top-notch stars of Hollywood and Broadway, have agreed to take part in the great Ben Davis pre-election rally and entertainment to be held on that date at the Golden Gate Ballroom in Harlem.

Interviewed at the Zanzibar Cafe, where they are currently appearing every night, the members of the quartette talked about their lives and their art.

"When we started singing really professionally, five or six years ago, spirituals were seldom heard," said Clyde Riddick, first tenor, and the chief spokesman of the group in our interview. "People didn't realize what the spirituals meant, and the same goes for folk songs. But now the people hear them everywhere. The life of the spirituals is coming back."

Henry Owens, the second tenor, nodded gravely, and baritone Alton Bradley smiled his agreement.

FIGHTING SONG

Besides singing spirituals and folk music this group sometimes make up their own songs. They are especially proud of **The General Jumped at Dawn** in Hollywood Canteen. "It's got the general idea," said Clyde Riddick a little shyly, "of those of every race in the General's troop, all fighting together for freedom. As we put it in the song, everybody fighting together 'from Esquimeaux to Indian chief'."

Another of the quartet's original songs, **Stalin Wasn't Stallin,'** was composed shortly after the Red Army stopped the Nazis at Stalingrad. About two years ago, it was taken by Quentin Reynolds to Moscow as a present to Stalin, and now the singers hope the whole Red Army is singing it.

The original Golden Gate Quartette began singing together as grammar-school friends in Norfolk, Va., getting their training and inspiration in camp meetings. Later they sang together in Norfolk's Booker T. Washington High School choral club. Their first tour, in the summer of 1935, was designed to raise the funds needed for a college education. Instead of going to college, the boys kept on singing.

"Maybe we'll get there yet someday," said Riddick a trifle wistfully. "We'll never be too old to go to college. nyhow, we want our children to have a college education, too, if we can make people understand the meaning of spirituals."

In 1938, the quartette came to New York City. In 1939, they created a furor at the Carnegie Hall Christmas Eve "Spirituals to Swing" concert. Since then, they've sung in Cafe Society, Uptown and Downtown, in the Paramount Theatre, and on the air over both Columbia and National hookups. They've made hundreds of records for both Victor and Columbia, and appeared in several Hollywood pictures.

Orlandus Wilson, fourth member of the original group, is now in the U.S. Navy. His place has been taken by Clifford Gumens.

The Golden Gate Quartette are especially proud that the late President Roosevelt liked their singing. They took part in the Inaugural gala affair in Constitution Hall in 1941, and sang at the White House several times at the President's request.

The Golden Gate Quartette will be only one of th headlines attractions, artists of stage and screen, at the Ben Davis show, which is being prepared by impresarios Ed Royce and Teddy Wilson. Others who have already promised to appear there include Pearl Primus, Art Tatum, Mary Lou Williams, the Calypso Artists, Ray Lev, Vivian Rivkin, Billy Holliday, Ernie Washington, Max Polikoff, and Imroy Bonner.

The affair is being sponsored by the Artists, Writers and Professional Division of the Davis Non-Partisan Committee, made up of a thousand leaders in the arts who have pledged themselves to help re-elect Ben Davis to the City Council.

Golden Gate Quartette

Golden Gate Quartette. Upper left, Orlandus Wilson (now in the Navy); upper right, Henry Owens, lower left, Alton Bradley, lower right, Clyde Riddick.

Katherine Dunham- Musical

Dunham's Creative Dance Ability Impresses Writer

Pittsburgh Courier 1-27-45

By GWENDOLYN HALE

Returning to New York after thrilling the entire country and Canada with her breath-taking "Tropical Revue," Katherine Dunham captured the Century theatre recently. The great brainy ballerina deserves high praise for injecting an aesthetic quality to the jazz dance movements so popular today in America. Her archeological study in the West Indies verified the fact that the various cultures of the New World have been enriched to no small degree by the native rites and dance rhythms of ancient Africa.

Miss Dunham is to be congratulated for maintaining a dance company that works on a year 'round basis—something entirely new for the serious theatrical world. This is no mean accomplishment. The technique of the dancers is continually being improved. There are daily classes covering primitive, modern and ballet movements, and the finest of all, the new fundamental Dunham technique, which she believes challenges the dancer and integrates the audience through its projecting pantomimic and creative quality.

The highlight of the evening was the three-part ballet, "L'Ag'ya," with its setting on Martinique during the 18th century. The ballet opens at Vaudin, a fishing village where the townspeople gather in the market place to barter their fish and fruits. Julot, the villian, upon being slighted by Alcide, the idol of the village and sweetheart of Loulouse, proceeds to intimidate the beautiful village porteresses. There follows a charming scene between the two sweethearts, Loulouse and Alcide. Julot, jealous of the felicity shared by the two lovers, puts an end to their wooing by courting the attention of Loulouse, who only exhibits disdain. Loulouse implores the impetuous Alcide to leave with her. Julot remains to ponder over an evil plan of revenge.

The next scene finds Julot wandering through the Zombie forest. The audience gradually becomes as frightened as Julot, for the eerie cries and the nightmarish shufflings and gyrations of the zombies are maddening. King Zombie does a bewitching dance composed of primitive movements brought from Africa to the New World. If one watches closely, one will detect a step or two popular in our American jazz world. The second act is climaxed by King Zombie presenting Julot with a "cambois," a voodoo love charm.

The last act begins with a scene of gaiety and festivity. Dashing village folk clad in colorful costumes dance the Creole Mazurka or "Mazouk," and the dynamic Beguine. At the height of the excitement, Julot enters with his "cambois," which casts a spell on everyone, causing them to dance the "Majumba," a love dance of ancient Africa. As Loulouse falls more and more under its hypnotic power, Alcide impetuously breaks loose from its spell and challenges Julot to the Ag'ya, a fighting dance of Martinique. This is the most breath-taking moment of the ballet. The dance is composed of elaborate prancing, falling on both hands and kicking of feet in the air. It is fast and furious! Alcide, for a second, remains the victor. Attracted by some strange bars of music, he slowly turns and walks away from Julot and toward Loulouse. Julot stealthily creeps toward Alcide and springs madly onto his back, breaking his neck as he carries him to the floor. In awe, the villagers shudder. Loulouse slowly dies beside her sweetheart of a broken heart. Loulouse is beautifully portrayed by Miss Dunham.

Ag'ya was probably an outgrowth of the French Savatte, a dance done by kicking, or it might have been influenced by the Nigerian wrestling matches which were accompanied by rhythm—rhythm accompaniment being uniquely used in every native endeavor. Miss Dunham, during her study in Martinique, made motion pictures of the native dances and folk art, and collected the main themes heard in the musical compositions written especially for this ballet by Robert Sanders and orchestrated by Martin Gabowitz, the conductor-pianist.

Miss Dunham shows her genius as a story teller not only in "L'Ag'ya," but in "Flaming Youth, 1927." Helen Dowdy is a blues singer worthy of note.

"Rare Tonga," a Polynesian folk tale, can be appreciated from the orchestra for its lovely, subtle facial and arm movements and from the far balcony for its artistic ffoor patterns. Beside being a swift - moving, exciting dance, "Choro," a 19th century Brazilian Quadrille, is marvelous from the standpoint of chorography. Syvilla Fort. Lawaune Ingram, Lenwood Morris and Talley Beatty display their virtuosity as ballet dancers. "Tropics," better known as "the woman with the cigar," and "Bahiana" are two of Miss Dunham's most successful numbers in which she ingeniously casts her coquettish eyes and gracefully moves to Latin American music. "Promenade—Havana 1910" is gay and full of surprises. The Helen Dowdy quartet made to live again the once-popular "Strut-in "Barrel House"; Lucille Ellis for her verve in "Rhumba with a Little Jive Mixed in," and as the flirtatious dancer in "Street Scene—Port au Prince"; Syvilla Fort in "Drum Ritual"; Tommy Gomez, Talley Beatty, Lavinia Williams and Lawaune Ingram for their splendid dancing throughout the revue; Bobby Capo for his delightful rendition of an original composition, "Para Que Tu Veas"; Julio Mendez, Candido Vicenty and Oscar Estrada, the percussionists; Dave Wasserman for the superb lighting and John Pratt for the colorful and effective costumes.

ters Ball." 1-27-45

Deserving special mention are Claude Marchant as the villainous Julot; Vanoye Aikens, the amiable Alcide; Roger O'Hardiena, Roi Zombie and for his performance

new york show front

Philadelphia Tribune 2-10-45 Pg.

KATHERINE DUNHAM'S PURCHASE OF A MANSION

NEW YORK—Katherine Dunham, the interpretive dancer, who recently purchased the Walter S. Gieberman mansion at 14 ast 71st street off Fifth avenue in the heart of New York City's world-famous, ritzy Mayfair section, is a character unique in modern show life.

This lithe, voluptuous dancer, who came from Chicago several years ago a comparatively unknown and skyrocketed into the top brackets of the interpretive dance arts, has a faculty for doing the unusual and crashing in where angels fear to tread.

Highly educated and with a definite purpose in mind, Miss Dunham's career has been marked by one precedent breaking incident after another. It is a far cry from the poorly-heated, back yard, over-a-garage studio that Miss Dunham maintained in Chicago in her struggling days to the mansion of a millionaire located next door to some of the biggest names in the white social and financial world.

To her this must represent a distinct triumph; a breaking through of color lines and restrictions that others before her could have accomplished had their minds been set on doing just that.

Miss Dunham's husband, John Pratt, whom she married here in New York several years ago is white. Miss Dunham married Pratt because she was simply in love with him and not because she had a so-called white complex which some might accuse her of being possessed with, mainly because she has spent such a tremendous sum for a mansion in the midst of them. 2-10-45

The dancer, who says that she will reside in the mansion, will also conduct her recently organized dancing school which is temporarily located in a white studio in Greenwich Village.

Katherine Dunham is the first Negro in moden New York to own a residence in the East Sixties or Seventies between Park and Fifth avenues.

Prior to her Broadway appearance recently, Katherine Dunham interrupted her recital at Louisville, Kentucky to tell her audience that she would never play that town again unless they permitted Negroes equal seating accommodations. In this connection she has shown the tenacity of purpose of Paul Robeson, who, on many occasions has denounced the separate seating arrangements for Negroes and whites in certain southern and border cities where he has sung or appeared. Somewhere down the line the dream of a new world evisioned by both Katherine Dunham and Paul Robeson is bound to appear and, when it does, it will be a place of happy living for Negroes whose minds haave been associated with taht along the lines of Dunham's and Robeson's.

This piece is not to raise hell because other Negroes are'nt buying expensive pieces of property in exclusive white residential zones. Far from it. Instead the comment made here is merely objective discourse based on what can happen.

There are some Negroes who are now saying that the $280.000—or whatever the amount paid by Miss Dunham—could have been put to a far more constructive use than to purchase a huge, expensive stone mansion for a dancing school These people would have it that the sum (which was probably far less than the quoted price, possibly around $47.000 or $50.000) could have been put into a factory, playground, or recreational center to help eliminate some of the juvenile delinquency with which we are so sorely afflicted during these war years. Such people would say that kids could learn to dance on the sidewalks as most of them have learned and that the gesture by Miss Dunham would be more outstanding if her viewpoint on racial matters were more constructively centered. 2-10-45

However, to deny the person the right to spend his or her money as he or she sees fit is beside the question and shouldn't be argued even in rude circles. No one asks Lena Horne what she does with her money, or Bill Robinson, Ethel Waters, Marian Anderson, Paul Rebeson, or Dorothy Maynard. I am quite sure that all put their money to some worthy use, whether personal or public. Dunham's splurge was just one of those things in which a personal desire was attended to and I think it was well attended to.

Dunham Revue Is Altered, but It Still Sizzles

Chicago Daily Tribune 1-25-45 Ill.

BY CLAUDIA CASSIDY.

[Reprinted from yesterday's late Tribune.]

Not much has changed about Katherine Dunham's "Tropical Revue" since it played the Blackstone last spring—in its Studebaker reincarnation it is still a crackling show for brilliant dancers, padded in the second half to eke out the evening, and with one big new number, L'Ag'ya, to replace the rites of fertility so blazoned by the publicists last season.

As distinguished dancing there is no comparison between the two, but "L'Ag'ya" may prove popular with the average audience. It strikes me as a voodoo version of Agnes de Mille's ballet in "Oklahoma!", tho I admit I can't work in the scene where Julot goes to the zombie king to get a love charm to lure Loulouse away from Alcide. The king of the zombies was a great disappointment. I expected Roger Ohardieno to be something fearful, and there he was a scarecrow with a corncob pipe, rocking away in a chair and going "hee hee" while his victims played walking dead even on stilts. 1-25-45

But back to "Oklahoma!" Miss Dunham, usually the siren of the piece, comes out looking most fetching in a short white dress and dances with Vanoye Aikens in the most gentle of courting pieces, interrupted by the villain, who looks rather more like a cat than Pore Jud. Then when the villain gets back with that charm, the l'ag'ya, or wrestling dance, results in the death of the hero, bested when he thinks he has won.

But the chief trouble with "L'Ag'ya" is that it builds up to a terrific letdown. That dance is supposed to be deadly, with the kind of footwork that means murder. Mr. Aikens had murder in the whites of his eyes, Claude Marchant looked treacherous, and the dancing was expert, but the only people who seemed in danger were the orchestra men who kept getting caught in the discards of Miss Dunham's zombie strip tease. 1-25-45

But the Dunham Dancers are top-flight in their field and Miss Dunham is one of the most engaging entertainers to be found back of footlights. Her teasing "Bahiana" is even more seductive than usual, tho her scene with the cigar has been altered a little, and not improved. The "Rara Tonga" remains an effective Polynesian folk tale, with Ramona Erwin its beautiful chosen woman and Tommy Gomez a sinuous serpent as the husband struck down by the cruel god.

There is some jive mixed in with primitive dances and the best of the show has a gaiety that leaps right out to the audience. Polito is its new singer, a crooner of sorts, but the Dowdy Quartet is back, and those superior drummers are on hand, tho Albert Arkuss no longer leads the expert orchestra. Martin Gabowitz, the new man, conducts with his index fingers, and almost achieves his predecessor's rhythm, which was as vivid as John Pratt's costumes.

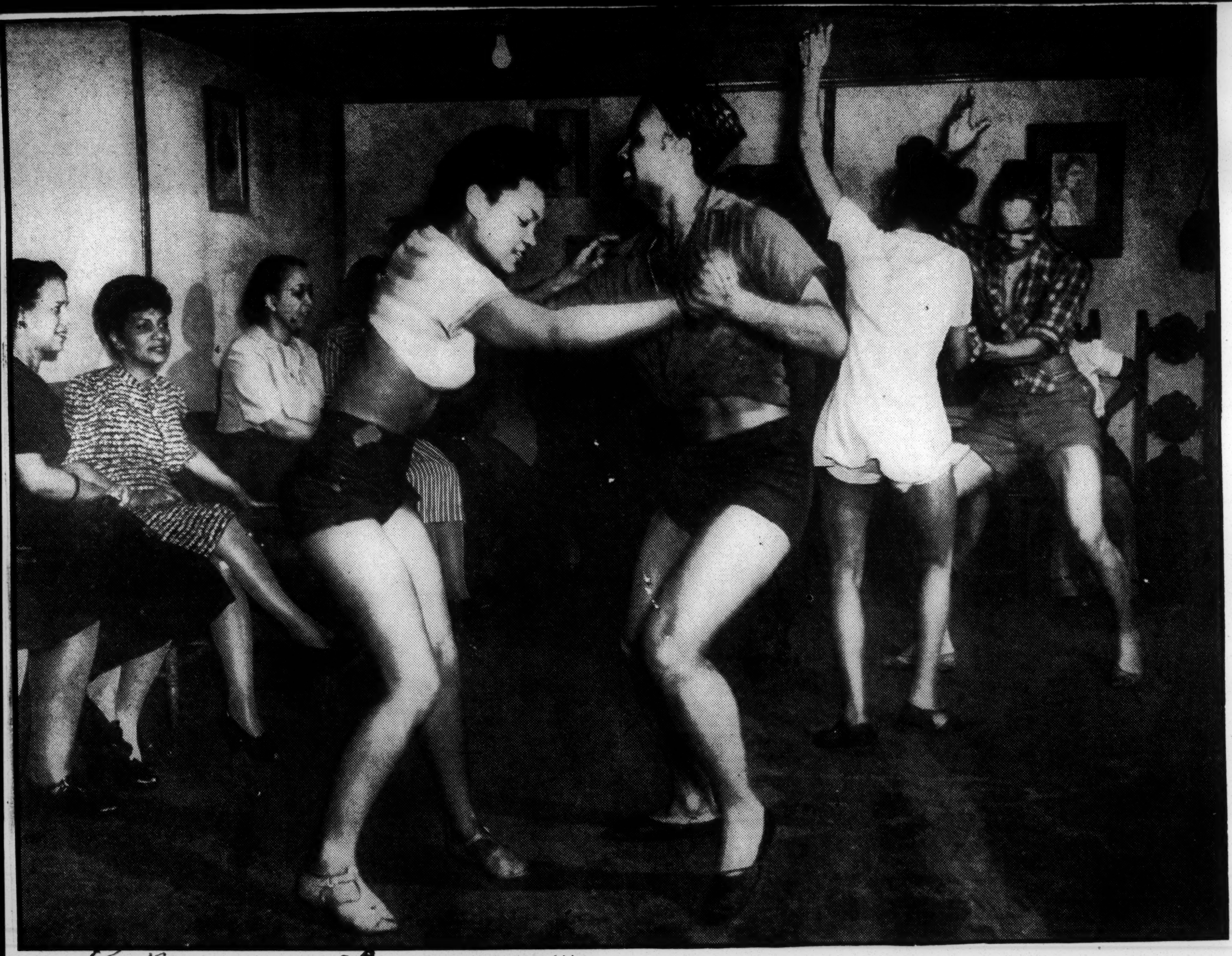


Photo by Skippy Adelman

BERTHA KITT AND RICHARD JAMES, in foreground, with another pair of Katherine Dunham Dancers, snapped during a late rehearsal for *Blue Holiday* at the Belasco, where the show opened last Monday. The women enjoying the performance from the side are members of the Hall Johnson Choir, also in the show.

88b - 1945

Katherine Dunham-Musical

Cook Balks as Employer

AFRO-AMERICAN 1-27-45

Fetes Katherine Dunham

1-27-45

MADISON, WIS. (ANP)—When Katherine Dunham, and her troupe appeared here recently an incident occurred which highlighted the racial conciousness which has come to life in this formerly rather liberal university town.

It seems that Dr. H. Seuddor Mokool profossor at the University of Wisconsin and associated with the Rosenwald fund which had been one of the forces contributory to Miss Dunham's success and Mrs. McKeel invited Miss Dunham to a social event at their home.

Their graciousness raised a furore in certain university circles, it is said, but the pay-off came in their own household.

It seems that their cook took special resentment at seeing Miss Dunham entertained in the home of her employers. She could not understand their inviting "a woman of that type to a home where she would have to serve her."

The McKeels liked their cook and needed her in this town where help is at a premium. They were more or less unconcerned about the attitude of higher-ups. Finally they mollified her and now all is well.

1-27-45

But wait—the cook is colored.

Ayon Long Outstanding in Katherine Dunham Vehicle

The Afro American Baltimore 10-13-45

By CARL DITON

NEW YORK—(ANP)—A huge crowd of Dunhamites gathered at the Adelphi Theatre amid a downpour of rain to welcome Katherine Dunham and her company back to Broadway in a dramatic musical play called "Carib Song," based upon a book by William Archibald with music by Baldwin Bergersen.

The plot was quite common. An easily seduced wife (Miss Dunham) of an old-fashioned and irate husband (William Franklin) becomes pregnant by a cunning little fisherman (Avon Long). She repents only to be murdered by the husband. Doubtless the audience had come only to see Miss Dunham dance.

But the temptation was too great for displaying her gift for dramatic acting and so she happily lifted the play for another moment from the dullness with which it seemed to suffer largely through the first of the two acts.

Jargon Over Our Heads

A play, to be interesting throughout. should not be lacking in topics that must be put over the footlights in comprehensible language. But the West Indian jargon in use, fascinating as it was aurally, was only dimly intelligible to those of us who hear so little of it, although Mercedes Gilbert's utterings were perhaps the clearest.

Balt. Md.

Avon Long, one of the nimblest and cleverest of entertainers, heightened the show immensely in his singing of "Woman Is a Rascal" with which he nearly escaped stopping the performance with numerous encores. But the genuine lyric hit of the evening was "Sleep, Baby, Don't Cry," sung by Harriet Jackson.

Philadelphia John Diggs also did a fine tenor number amplified from off-stage. In fact, the ensemble singing in general was of splendid calibre, as well as the solo singing of William Franklin, well remembered for his fine Pooh-bah performances in the "Swing Mikado" and of Giorgo Germont in Verdi's "Traviata."

Dancers Unsurpassed

And for the aesthetic interpretation of primitive dancing, the Dunham dancers are well-nigh unsurpassed: Lucille Ellis, Lenwood Morris, Tommy Gomez, Vanoye Aikens and Lauwanne Ingram.

The George Stanton presentation of "Carib Song" does not represent Miss Dunham at her peak, but is surely worth an evening's entertainment and should do much toward helping this more than worthy ballet pioneer on her way to greater undertakings.

Russian "Porgy" Holds Premiere

AFRO-AMERICAN Baltimore, Md

By CHATWOOD HALL

MOSCOW—The Russian concert version of George Gershwin's Porgy and Bess" had its premiere at Actors House last week presented by an all-Russian theatrical society. Wayland Rudd, who played the role of Robbin when "Porgy" was on Broadway, was present as critic. 5-5-45

Rudd, well known in Russian theatrical and movie circles, is being filmed in a new picture based on Jules Verne's "Fifteen-Year-Old Captain" in the role of Hercules. For years he was the only colored member of the Jasper Deeter's Theatre in Philadelphia. 5-5-45

Charles Burroughs, New York-born son of Mrs .William Burroughs, former New York school teacher, now announcer on a Moscow radio, left last week to join the American armed forces.

When asked what branch of the U.S. service he preferred, young Burroughs said, "It makes no difference so long as I can fight fascist aggressors."

Composer Dunbar Thrills War Torn French Capital

St. Louis Argus 1-12-45 Mo.

By VERNA ARVEY

HOLLYWOOD—(Calvin's News Service)—Programs and newspaper clippings have just reached the United States concerning the sensation caused by Rudolph Dunbar, famous Negro journalist and musician, when he conducted the Pasdeloup Symphony Orchestra in the Salle Gavean in liberated Paris on November 19th of 1944. The house was completely sold out. the French musicians agreed unanimously that the whole performance was unique in the musical history of Paris, and the "Afro American Symphony" by William Grant Still, which was featured on the program, drew shouts of approbation and vigorous stamps form the enthusiastic French audience. Even the men in the orchestra, which played magnificently, cheered lustily after they had finished playing the work. The other compositions of Dunbar's program were Lalo's 'Symphonic Espagnole" and Dvorak's Symphony. "From the New World."

Bojangles Gets Top Role in "Memphis Bound" Play

AFRO-American Baltimore, Md

NEW YORK — Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, whose last Broadway hit was "The Hot Mikado," has been signed by John Wildberg to a two-year contract and will head the cast of the all-colored musical "Memphis Bound."

The show suggested by "Pinafore," last referred to as "Send Me a Sailor," has been retitled "Memphis Bound" and will begin rehearsals on March 29 under the direction of Robert Ross.

It will have its first trial in New Haven, Conn., on March 26, swtich to Boston April 30-May 12, and then open here for inspection on May 14, probably at the Broadway Theatre. 3-17-45

In addition to Bojangles, Avon Long, Sportin' Life of "Porgy and Bess," and Georgette Harvey, well-known Broadway actress, have supporting roles. Muriel Rahn, star of "Carmen Jones," turned down a bid to continue her concert tour.

Duke Outranks Herman in Poll

AFRO-AMERICAN

CHICAGO. — Duke Ellington edged out Woody Herman to win the 1944 swing-band title in a poll conducted annually by Down Beat magazine. Baltimore, Md.

In the small instrument division, the King Cole Trio topped Louis Jordan's Tympany Five, 1,787 to 963, and the Pied Pipers beat the Ink Spots, 1,430 to 904, in the small vocal class. 1-6-45

Roy Eldridge, trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham, Lawrence Brown, trombones; Johnny Hodges, alto sax, were named on the all-star swing band with Sy Oliver as arranger.

Many Negro Orchestra Leaders Win Awards As Esquire Magazine Selects Swing Kings

New York AGE 1-13-45

1-4-45

Esquire Magazine, on the 100th anniversary of Jazz, Wednesday announced the winners in its second annual poll to select the outstanding kings of swing for 1945.

They will be featured on an hour and a half Blue network program January 17, with many of the winners, including the previously announced outstanding band—Duke Ellington's orchestra — performing in the second annual All-American Jazz Concert at Los Angeles Philharmonic Auditorium for the benefit of Volunteer Army Canteen Service. 1-13-45

Winners in three classes will be presented with Esky trophies in recognition of their supremacy in the "hot" music field.

Gold award winners are: Cootie Williams, trumpet; Jay C. Higginbothem, trombone; Johnny Hodges, also saxophone; Benny Goodman, clarinet; Teddy Wilson, piano; Al Casey, guitar; Oscar Pettiford, string bass; Sidney Catlett, drums; Red Norvo, vibraharp; Louis Armstrong, vocal; Mildred Bailey, vocal; Duke Ellington, arranger and band; Buck Clayton, trumpet (favorite in the Armed Forces).

Silver award: Roy Eldridge, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, saxophone; Benny Carter, alto saxophone; Lester Young, tenor saxophone; Edmond Hall, clarinet; Art Tatum, piano; Oscar Moore, guitar; Slam Stewart, string bass; Dave Tough, drums; Harry Carney, bari tone saxophone; Joe Turner, vocal; Billie Holliday, vocal; Billy Strayhorn, arranger; Count Basie, band; Willie Smith, alto saxophone (Armed Forces favorite. 1-13-45

New stars: Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet; Bill Harris, trombone; Herbie Fields, alto saxophone; Flip Phillips, tenor saxophone; Aaron Sachs, clarinet; Eddie Heywood, piano; Remo Palmieri, guitar; Chubby Jackson, string bass; Specs Powell, drums; Ray Nance, violin; Eddie Vinson, vocal; Anita O'Day, vocal; Johnny Thompson, arranger; Lionel Hampton, band; Mel Powell, piano (Armed Forces favorite) 1-13-45

Climax of the radio section of the concert, which also will be broadcast in its entirety to the heroes on all war fronts by Armed Forces Radio Service, will be a three-way jam session with musicians playing simultaneously from Los Angeles, New York and Basin street, New Orleans—the birthplace of Jazz. 1-13-45

Featured from New York will be the Benny Goodman quintet, including gold Esky winner Teddy Wilson and Red Norvo, and Mildred Bailey. Louis Armstrong, Jay C. Higginbotham and the old time greats of Jazz will be carried over the air from New Orleans and the Los Angeles concert will feature: Duke Ellington's orchestra Billie Holliday, Anita O'Day, Coleman Hawkins, Art Tatum, Al Casey, Sid Catlett and Willie Smith. The latter has just been released from the Armed Services and is now a member of Henry James' band.

CARLOTTA FRANZEL

BILL ROBINSON DUE IN WILDBERG SHOW

N.Y. Times
N.Y.; N.Y.

Bojangles Will Return to Local Stage in 'Memphis Bound!' —Signed for Two Years

3-9-45

By SAM ZOLOTOW

Two modern musicals, more or less suggested by "Pinafore," are in the offing. From all accounts the first to reach New York will be "Memphis Bound!", John Wildberg's hepcat offering with an all-Negro troupe starring none other than Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, whose services have been retained until June, 1947. That's how highly the management rates Bojangles! Associated with Mr. Wildberg in a supervisory capacity is Vinton Freedley, who generally does his own shows.

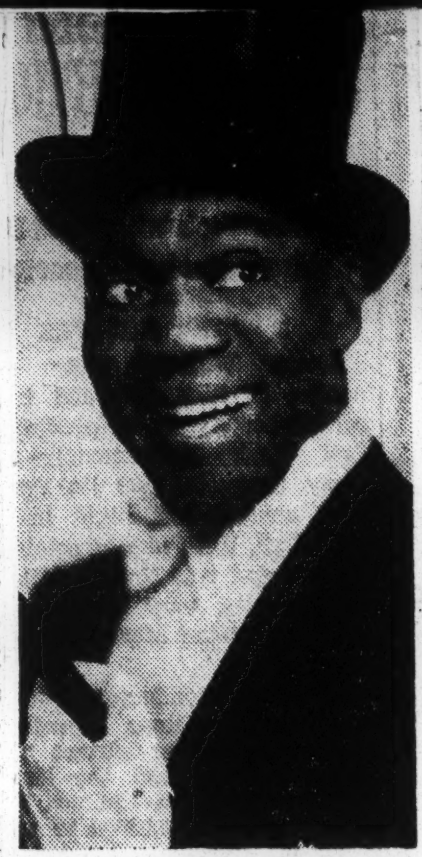
Remembered for his appearances in "Blackbirds" and "The Hot Mikado" (that was derived from Gilbert & Sullivan, too), Bojangles has been absent from the Broadway stage since "All in Fun" (1940), a revue which passed into the archives right after its third performance.

With a supporting cast including Avon Long and Georgette Harvey, "Memphis Bound!" will start practicing under Robert Ross' direction on March 26. New Haven will inspect the production on April 26. After spending a fortnight, April 30-May 12, in Boston, the attraction will arrive here the week of May 14, probably at the Broadway. 3-9-45

Last refefred to as "Send Me a Sailor," "Memphis Bound!" is the joint collaboration of Don Walker and Clay Warnick, who are responsible for the music and lyrics, and Albert Barker, who did the book. Sally Benson, whose "Junior Miss" stories furnished the inspiration for the dramatization of the hit comedy, will have a hand in "Memphis Bound!" too. The announcement says she is "correlating the book and dialogue and is working with Mr. Wildberg and Mr. Freedley in whipping the production into shape."

"Hollywood Pinafore" Plans

That other show emulating from "Pinafore" is called "The Hollywood Pinafore" and is expected here on May 29 or 30. George S. Kaufman is supplying the book and lyrics to fit the combined talents of the William Gaxton-Victor Moore team. The sponsors are Max Gordon and Meyer Davis. It was the latter who formerly intended doing an earlier version of the Walker-Warnick-Barker script.



Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, who will appear in "Memphis Bound!" a musical comedy inspired by "Pinafore."

Josh White and Libby Holman at Wilshire Ebell

Los Angeles Tribune
3-5-45

The unusual theatrical fare of Libby Holman and Josh White will be presented on the West Coast for the first time Friday evening at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre. The two, who have been touring the country giving concerts, are unusual in themselves, a white woman who has somehow managed to acquire what critics call the authentic Negro style of song delivery, and a Negro from the deep South whose untutored guitar playing and singing has won him praise in New York's sophisticated cafe society. 3-5-45

Miss Holman sings spirituals and White work songs. His album of Chain Gang numbers is a collector's item.

Hague

MUSICAL ROUNDUP

P.M. N.Y.; N.Y.

'Carib Song'

(Reprinted from Yesterday's Late Edition)

In a season when the musical contributions of the Broadway stage so far have been limited to a smattering of rehashed Johann Strauss, in the gone and easily forgotten *Mr. Strauss Goes to Boston*, and to parodies of Chopin's pianistic melodies, shouted by Jan Kiepura and cackled by Marta Eggerth in the current monstrosity called *Polonaise*, it is an agreeable relief to drop in at the Adelphi and hear the charming and neatly integrated score Baldwin Bergersen, with the expert assistance of orchestrator Ted Royal, has provided for *Carib Song*.

The story that William Archibald has contrived for this Trinidadian folk opera-ballet is no great shakes, and has many dramatic weaknesses; but its writing catches the flavor and rhythm of the peculiar native manner of speech, and its very naivete gives it an unpretentiousness and a genuineness that are enhanced by the disarming quality of the performance it receives.

The fetching Miss Dunham, without sacrificing any of her sultry appeal, has put aside her more honky-tonk mannerisms of recent seasons and stays well within the simple bounds of the character—the young wife—she portrays. And she has devised some telling choreography for her company of dancers, notably the spirited Washerwomen sequence in the second act and the first-act-finale Shango Ritual—the latter a better-than-average voodoo affair in which Tommy Gomez does some extraordinary twisting as a boy possessed by the spirit of a snake.

Most of all, though, it is Bergersen's music that lends *Carib Song* its chief distinction – the haunting *Sleep, Baby, Don't Cry* and *Oh, Lonely One*, sung by sweet-voiced Harriet Jackson; the fine *Water Movin' Slow*, voiced by William Franklin; the calypso *Woman Is a Rascal*, put over with great style by Avon Long, and *Basket, Make a Basket, Go to Church Sunday* and the other ensemble songs which, along with the incidental music and simulated jungle sounds, do so much to knit the show together and give it its indigenous Caribbean tone.

If you go to *Carib Song* expecting a bang-up Broadway show with splashy, set song and dance numbers, or something all sex and a yard wide like Miss Dunham's recent *Tropical Revue*, you will be disappointed. But if you'd like to daily life of the people who live in the sea-bound forests and hills of the tropical isles of the British West Indies, you should have a very pleasant evening. 10-16-45 see a simple and essentially honest evocation—in words, music, dancing and decor—of the folklore and

—Robert A. Hague

8-b-1945 Musical

Sensational New York Pianist "I Was Blessed," Says Broadway's Newest Jazz Idol, Eddie Heywood

AFRO-AMERICAN

1-6-45

By R. D. RICHARDS

NEW YORK—Broadway's newest idol is young Eddie Heywood, sensational swing pianist, who suddenly leaped from obscurity into fame by virtue of his recording of "Begin the Beguine."

Appearing for the first time at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, he packed the house at every performance last week, forcing the owners to establish two box offices to take care of impatient patrons.

Eddie's only answer to this is, "I was blessed." But you realize that there's more to this than plain good luck when you hear his fans yelling their heads off as he and his six-piece band go to town on popular numbers.

The screaming and swooning of young girls in the theatre would do even Frank Sinatra proud.

Swept the Country

"I trace it back to my recording of 'Begin the Beguine,' the Cole Porter tune," he told the AFRO this week in an exclusive interview. "They played that song on radio until it swept the country.

"The song had been a hit long before this, but I did a new arrangement of it. Requests came in fast for it, and radio officials gave them what they wanted.

"The funniest thing about it," Eddie continued, "was that nobody knew the arranger was colored, and it wasn't until recently that people found out."

Born in Atlanta

He was born in Atlanta, Ga., and began playing the piano when he was 10. His father, also a pianist, made Eddie play classical music for three years before he took up jazz. At the age of 14, he was chosen to conduct an orchestra in his home town.

After that, I began to get on the move. I tried my luck in Texas, then in Chicago where I hooked up with Benny Carter's band. From there, I came to New York."

Leading a three-piece band, he went into the Village Vanguard for the first engagement on his own. Jack Gale, white theatrical agent, spotted him, and realized that Eddie was going places.

Band Enlarged

EDDIE HEYWOOD

He signed him to a contract which took him to the Three Deuces at 52nd Street and later to Cafe Society Downtown and Uptown. It was at Cafe Society that he enlarged his band.

It was also there that he made the celebrated recording that started him on the road to success.

Eddie has appeared on the Kate Smith radio show, with Milton Berle, and many others. Right now, Paramount Pictures and MGM are bidding for him to come to Hollywood.

Not as Good as Duke Yet

"I'm taking my time," Eddie said. "I want to go slow so that I will stay on top when I get there. I'm not as good as Duke Ellington yet, so I'd rather go slow."

His manager, Jack Gale, nodded in approval.

"I know Eddie is great," he added, "but I have no intentions of overworking him. We're going to travel the safe and true road. We signed a contract with General Amusement recently which is as good as any held by our top-notch name bands."

Heywood and his band were booked at Loew's State Theatre in New York last week. From there they went to Chicago, and then to the Brown Derby in Washington.

Angelenos write music for film

Los Angeles Tribune

1-1-45

NEW YORK — Danny Baxter and Eugene Phillips, two Los Angeles tunesmiths, scored with Louis Jordan when the leader of the Tympany Five was selecting music for his all-sepia motion picture, "Caldonia," which was produced here recently. Baxter authored the tune, "Buzz Me", while Phillips is responsible for ::She's Mah Honey Chile." Both have been sold to Preview Music.

1-7-45

In the two-reel picture by Berle Adams are: Richard Huey, of the Broadway success, "Bloomer Girl;" Nicki O'Daniel, actor in the revusical, "Early To Bed;" a chorus, comics Sam (Spo-De-Ode) Theard and George Wilshire; and the Tympany Five.

Critic slaps at Bill Robinson

Los Angeles Tribune California

1-1-45

NEW YORK—Perhaps he'll stop stop it now!

Indications that Bill Robinson's jokes, long held in disrepute by Negro audiences for their ante-bellum flavor, no longer please those they are inteded to please, namely white audiences, were seen in recent comment in the night club column, "Tables for Two" in the New Yorker magazine.

Said the writer, identified only as R. E. M. W., "Bill Robinson, who is wonderful when he is demonstrating that you don't have to be an acrobat to be a good tap dancer . . . is something else again when he is demonstrating that a comic is basically not much funnier than the book he uses. This season't book is on sale at all the better Woolworths (nd no cabaret tax either)."

1-1-45

The criticism was contained in a review of the current Negro show at the Zanzibar club here which presents the Louis Armstrong and Claude Hopkins bands and Maurice Rocco, pianist, in addition to other acts.

Rocco also came in for a bit of subtle criticism. Said the reviewer:

"The Zanzibar's interior decorators have been at his instrument, first muffling it in gold-studded patent leather and then seeking to offset this handicap by installing some sort of electr. l device which gives every note in the treble the strident tone of a calliope. Pianos are moody and intractable affairs, lending themselves to mechanization much less readily than guitars, and Rocco doesn't sound quite as well as he used to on an unadorned and unmutilated Steinway. He does a satisfying job, just the same, and the stompings, moans, and pranings which he accompanies himself, while scarcely germane to the work in progress, are entertaining rather than annoying. If the Zanzibar were mine, there would be a lot more of Rocco, but in his pristine, unelectrified state."

April Dance Festival To Feature Robinson

P.M. New York

3-22-45

The second festival of "African Dances and Modern Rhythms" to be presented April 4th and 6th at Carnegie Hall will feature Bill Robinson, celebrated tap dancer. Permission for Robinson to appear was granted by John Wildberg, who has the dancer under contract for the forthcoming *Memphis Bound*.

3-20-45

Others to perform at the concerts include Asadata Dafora, African dancer and musician; Princess Orelia and Pedro, Brazilian dancers; Maurice Rocco, boogie-woogie pianist; Josephine Premice, presenting Haitian dances; Mary Lou Williams, jazz pianist, and the Duke of Iron, calypso singer.

MARVA LOUIS, who made her debut in February as a vocalist, won her spurs as "the vocal discovery" of 1944.

Katherine Dunham a Hit with 'Tropical Revue'

BY LEN G. SHAW

Free Press Drama Critic

Katherine Dunham is alone in her field. A second viewing of her "Tropical Revue" at the Cass Sunday evening established her topflight status beyond cavil as far as this reporter is concerned.

Miss Dunham is very much more than just a dance interpreter. She is a creative artist with imagination and the ability to put her ideas into concrete form with a vividness that frequently is distinctly startling, and always commands attention.

Shaw

To her already extensive program Miss Dunham has added a new creation since her last visit. It is called "L'Ag'Ya," and it comes about as close to compressing a whole evening's thrills into a few minutes as could well be imagined.

SOLDIERS PRESENT OPERA STAR WITH TOKENS OF APPRECIATION.—At a recent appearance of the lovely operatic soprano, Miss Helen Jepson, at the Tuskegee Army Air Field, several members of the military personnel staff presented the star with gifts as tokens of appreciation from officers and enlisted men.

From left to right: Sgt. C. D. Nelson, of Champagne, Ill., of the Art department, shown with an oil painting which he painted from photographs of the singer; Miss Jepson wearing a corsage given her by the officers; Steven Barrett, her pianist-accompanist; Pvt. Ernest Hatfield, of Chester, Pa., with a bouquet of flowers presented to the singer on behalf of the enlisted men at TAAF, and Sgt. Ray E. Lagrone, of Little Rock, Ark., with his air-brush painting of the singer.

Talented Dancer Set for Recital

DURHAM, N.C.—Elizabeth A. Ray, talented young dancer, will appear in recital in Duke Auditorium at North Carolina College at 8 o'clock Saturday night, April 21.

Miss Ray, a native of Winston-Salem, first came to public notice as an unusual interpreter of the dance while a student at Radcliffe College, where she appeared with the Radcliffe College Dance Group.

Following her Radcliffe days, she studied the dance at New York University, at Bennington Summer School of Arts, and with Ethel Butler, formerly of the Martha Graham Dance Company at the King-Smith Studio.

Miss Ray specializes in modern dances, including blues, dramatized spirituals, race and and jazz numbers and the folk dances of many countries.

Marva Gives Up Cafe Job When Joe Objects

CHICAGO. — (ANP) — Marva Louis is no longer in a partnership contract and deal as singing star of El Grette, new night spot here. Her release came last week when she explained to Harry Fields and Charles Cole, other partners, that husband Joe Louis, now Sgt. Joe Louis of the armed forces, did not approve.

"Wait until after the war when you and I will open our own club," the champ told his wife in a phone conversation.

Marva manages Joe's interest in two Boston cafes. Such interests consist of a chicken shack, bowling alley and bar.

Sinatra Starts Anti-Bias Tour

Youngsters Like Singer's Drive

PHILADELPHIA (ANP) — "The Voice," Frank Sinatra, soared to new heights Tuesday when he announced his plan to enlist big names in show business to aid him in a campaign against racial intolerance and juvenile delinquency.

"I don't want my children to grow up ina world in which hate against people of other races and creeds exists," he told a group of youngsters gathered at the Fellowship house.

Sinatra told of his plan to parley with more than 200 leaders of the student bodies of public, parochial and high schools. The young people many of whom no doubt poured into the building to swoon while the "Voice," crooned some of their favorite tunes, were surprised at such humanistic qualities in their No. 1 hero.

SEATTLE, WASH.
STAR
Circ. D. 68,956
JUN 23 1945

MOORE BOOKS HAZEL SCOTT

Keyboard Siren Is Night Club Star

Hazel Scott, sepio siren of the keyboard, has been booked for a personal appearance at the Moore theater on Oct. 20, it is announced today by Impresario Cecilia Schultz.

Miss Scott, ranking star of the night clubs of New York and recently featured in several outstanding motion pictures, will replace Libby Holman and Josh White on the DeLuxe theater series.

An amazing personality coupled with a dynamic talent, which ranges from the immortal classics to the rhythmic pound of Negro boogie-woogie, has placed Miss Scott among the finest entertainers in the world.

This will be the New York star's first appearance in the Pacific Northwest and she will bring with her a trio of instrumentalists who have performed regularly with her on all engagements on the Great White Way.

Possessing a dashing wardrobe which blends admirably with the black and white ivories of the piano, Miss Scott is one of the most beautiful Negresses in the world.

She was given a featured spot in a recent Columbia production, "Something to Shout About," which elevated her to international fame.

OCTOBER 20—Hazel Scott, famed night club pianist, will bring rare style of playing to the stage of the Moore theater.

Wants Out of Negro Rolls

By DOLORES CALVIN

NEW YORK CITY — (Calvin's News Service) — "For 1946, the Negro's future in the theatre looks bright, for every day producers and fellow workers are falling in line with those who believe that the theatre is a vital weapon to ward off prejudice of all kinds and therefore, must be kept democratic."

Those were the strong and frank words of 6' 3" Maurice Ellis — 170 pounds of powerful actin, who will take the lead in a forthcoming Broadway production "Goodbye Uncle Tom."

Futhermore, Ellis has pinned his hopes to an unbiased cloud that it won't be long before Negroes can play parts white actors are doing now with success. He like to see "Life With Father," all colored with father having the same problems of a middleclass family man. And "The Two Mrs. Carrolls" done up in color fashion as "The Two Mrs. Johnsons" or such. The main point is that Negroes can act, really act and could make any play that's a success now on Broadway, a smash hit in their own right. Of course, that's a big order, but Ellis thinks they can fill it.

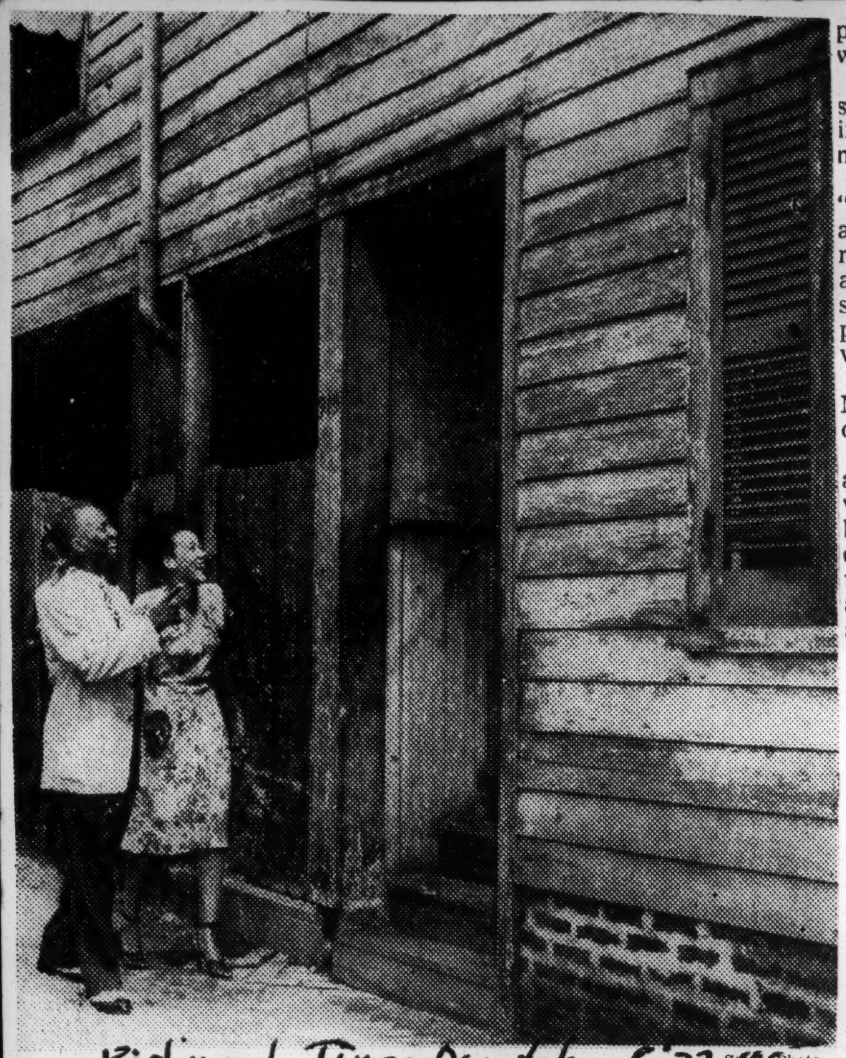
Maurice Ellis has always had faith in the Negro actor and in the American stage. His last drama on the great white way, was "Man To The Sea," which closed after three weeks, partly because the Navy thought a sea tale about the going on of three white Navy, wives during war- and partly because of bad press notices due to the Navy. The play, however, was democratic in its treatment of a Negro sailor, Ellis and his wife, Mildred Smith. Some of the cast were from the deep South, when that play had to close for lack of funds, those kids each took a cut in salary to keep it going another week. That's democracy at work and that's what we think Ellis means by the theatre being a "vital weapon."

CAREER BEGAN AT 16

Maurice Ellis' career began at 16 when one day, on the streets of his native Providence, R. I., a white man heard him sing and offered him a job in Boston, for $65 a week. From then, he appeared in Show Boat, Porgy and Bess and Cabin in the Sky. As a darker gangster in Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne's "The Pirate," on Broadway, Ellis says it was a plasure to work with them and an actor could learn a great deal.

He reminisces the time when he was McDuff in the WPA's MacBeth and forgot his lines. He knew, of course, that Shakspeare couldn't be ad libbed, so he walked around the stage for a few seconds looking very wise until it came back to him. He learned his lesson. Now, with several radio appearances to make a week he can't afford to forget.

The amazing thing about Ellis is that he owns a marvelous deep bass baritone. His grandfather was an inspiration and taught him all he knew. Ellis sings Water Boy and Deep River with all the polish of his idol, Paul Robeson. He sings Night and Day and I'll Walk Alone with the modern twist of his favorite, Nelson Eddy. That deep voice helps him on the Broadway stage; it gives him the independence he needs.



Richmond Times-Dispatch 8-23-45
Photo.

Bill Robinson Shows His Wife Where He Was Born

Bojangles Smiles in Front of 915 North Third Street

'Bojangles' and Wife Visit His Third Street Birthplace

By C. A. Paul

"Bojangles," that is, Bill Robinson, the fellow who made up the stairsteps dance routine, took his wife to 915 North Third St. yesterday and showed her the house in which he was born.

Bill, who learned to dance on the steps of a police station that once stood at Sixth and Marshall Sts., left Richmond when he was 7. At that tender age, he went into show business, joining up with a road show which was presenting "The Old South."

Yesterday, Bill stood in front of the house where he was born and pointed to an upstairs window.

"Yes, sir, I was born right in that room."

Bill wanted a picture of the house because, he said, his friends won't believe him when he tells them of his humble origin.

"I'm going to hang it on the wall and show it to 'em," said "Bojangles," whose nimble feet have enlivened several movies and innumerable show bills.

Bill meant that he was going to hang the picture on the wall of his swank New York co-operative apartment. 8-23-45

Bill Greets Bob

While the picture was being taken, Bill yelled across the street to a fellow named Bob and told him to wait up for him. Bob—Robert Scott, a Negro undertaker—and Bill have long been just like that.

"Yes, sir," said Bill, "when I come to Richmond I always know I have a place to eat and sleep, even if I'm broke," said Bill. "Even if I'm broke," he repeated slowly.

A few minutes before, he had said, with a faraway look in his eyes:

"You know, it don't seem possible that a fellow could start out from that house on North Third Street and—and get anywhere," he wound up modestly.

"I run with preachers and undertakers," Bill said, "trying to explain his friendship with the undertaker, "because they are good folks to know and the last people who have anything to do with you."

He smiled his "Richmond smile." That's what he calls the infectious grin that's known to millions.

"I love Richmond," Bill said. "You know there's something about your home town that just makes you feel different from any other place in the world. Yes, sir, I love Richmond. I guess the place I love next best is Belleville." 8-20-45

He explained that by saying a Negro bishop who is one of his cronies lives in Belleville.

Bill was driving a long, black, and quite expensive car. He was wearing a coat of robin's egg blue, brown slacks, brown-and-white oxfords. a blue shirt, and a tie that defied description, but which appeared to contain some splotches of yellow and blue.

Bill is 67 and declared he was unable to explain his "youth."

"Everybody wants to know," he said. "Me? I just don't fret about it."

"I went to four schools, two days apiece," Bill said, and he laughed. That, he vowed, was the extent of his formal education.

Education in Feet

Bill said that most of his education is in his feet anyhow and that those steps at that Sixth Street police station sure were a good place to educate your feet.

While Bill stood in front of the Third Street house, 100 or more Negro children gathered to gaze upon the boy who made good in all the big cities. They stood at a respectful distance.

"Look at those children," Bill said, "Aren't they cute? I love every one of them."

Some of the children ran down the street as Bill drove away and Bill kept waving at them.

He stopped for a traffic light. "I love traffic lights," he said. He probably was thinking of the traffic light he bought back in 1935 for the Adams and Leigh Streets intersection to safeguard Negro school children.

Negotiating for Picture

"Bojangles" and his wife, Elaine, 24, will leave this morning for New York, where Bill hopes to complete negotiations for another picture.

"It's called 'Two Southern Gentlemen' and I want that actor who played Abraham Lincoln in it. What's his name?" asked Bill.

"Do you mean Raymond Massey?" 8-23-45

"That's the one," he replied. "In this picture he's a young Southern millionaire and I've been working for his family a long time. His folks are dead and he lets me look after his money. I keep a woman—she's a kind of a sport, you see—from getting his money and everything winds up just fine. See? 'Two Southern Gentlemen.' I sure hope we can do that one."

Rap 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' Musical Scheduled for Bridgeport

The Daily Worker New York, New York Sec 67

9-22-45

BRIDGEPORT, Sept. 21.—Protest is mounting here against a scheduled showing of the revived musical version of **Uncle Tom's Cabin** on Sept. 28 under the auspices of Mayor McLevy's administration.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Negro Non-Partisan League, the Col. Charles Young Post of the American Legion, the Ministers' Alliance, the George Washington Carver Club, and the New Era Lodge of Elks have already protested officially to the Social-Democratic administration.

They state that the musical, with its whipping and bloodhound scenes, shows methods of dealing with Negroes which are best forgotten. Many individual trade union leaders, both AFL and CIO, have also requested the city to cancel the show, and more official action is expected from the trade unions and other organizations. So far city officials, although calling themselves Socialists, have taken the attitude that the show will make money and that the Negroes are being too sensitive, so that there is really no reason to withdraw it. The protest is well-organized, and while all other methods will be used first, the organizations involved state definitely that if necessary they will put out a picket line to stop the performance.

UNCLE TOM IN BRIDGEPORT

The Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Bridgeport has bowed to protests of union leaders, clergymen and Negro spokesmen and will not permit the showing of a musical version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." It is not clear whether there is something in this particular version that would, in the words of a CIO resolution, "breed racial animosity," or whether Uncle Tom, Little Eva, Simon Legree, the bloodhounds, Topsy and one or more lawyers named Marks are forever barred from Bridgeport. Harriet Beecher Stowe might not mind. The play or plays which have toured this country under the name of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" were not her work. Charles Dudley Warner insisted that when he took her to see one of them he had to explain the plot to her. But some of the rest of us might feel badly. Uncle Tom on the stage, with his friends and enemies, is part of American folklore. A child who has never seen Eliza crossing the boards, preferably on a stage erected in a tent, with the bloodhounds baying and the cakes of ice sometimes arranged so that they actually tilted when she stepped on them, has been bereft of part of his heritage. 9-26-45

One does understand why Negroes don't care so much for the Uncle Tom legend. Their disparaging term today for one of their race who puts on an ingratiating act to please white folks is, in fact, Uncle Tom. They don't want to be picturesque. They want to be dignified human beings. Still, Harriet Beecher Stowe was their friend, in writing her book and in other ways. She made Uncle Tom an impossible saint because she wished to prove that Negroes could produce saints. It was her art that failed a little, not her heart. As for the new musical version, one supposes its public relations counsel is not completely unhappy. It now has had a build-up for a possible Broadway opening.

At New York Nightclub

Dot Dongegan to Make $1,500

The Call Kansas City Kansas

NEW YORK. — (CNS) — Most exciting news of the week is that Dorothy Donegan, the Chicago boogie woogie pianist who started with $8 a week a few years ago, will take over key duties at the Three Dueces on 52nd street for $1,500 weekly, starting February 8th. She was last at the Zanzibar.

While in New York, she made a personal appearance doubling for the dancing Berry Brothers in "Star Time" which was her first Broadway musical. Last year in Hollywood, Dorothy did another 'first'. She debuted in pictures as Cab Calloway's bouncing swing pianist in "Sensations of 1945." But never had Dot come to New York to stay. 2-9-45

Always compared to the queen of them all, Hazel Scott, Chicagoans boasted Dorothy as being greater than Hazel. Now that Dot will be six blocks from Cafe Society Uptown, there'll be a good deal of comparing going back and forth.

The last resident of the Three Dueces to climb to fame almost overnight was Eddie Heywood, whose unique version of 'Begin the Beguine" blazed Broadway. Dorothy Donegan will do the same

Ink Spots Top News of Year

AFRO-AMERICAN

FLASH!

NEW YORK—The hearing to determine the ownership of the title "Ink Spots" scheduled for Tuesday, was reset for Thursday of this week after four postponements. 1-6-45

The 10 top theatrical stories of the year, 1944, attracting nationwide attention are as follows:

The Ink Spots' feud with Moe Gale which resulted in triple injunctions being filed in New York's Supreme Court;

Paul Robeson defied AFL to retain membership in the CIO, a rival group; floods of protests forced MGM to cancel plans for producing "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" Dixie Motion picture censor boards show hate in clipping films showing colored on equal basis with whites;

Hate Attempt Fails

Hollywood whites fail in effort to segregate colored residents in Westside district; N.Y. Federal Court dismisses suit to prevent showing of "The Negro Soldier" film in commercial theatres;

Vincent Tubbs, AFRO correspondent, polls 25,000 GIs in South Pacific to select "dream band" of musicians not in service; Katherine Durham scores Louisville, Ky., whites for segregation;

Dixie officers break up Navy band at St. Louis to teach members a lesson about fighting hatred in South; Lena Horne farmed out by MGM at $7,000 a week, received only $450 a week.

Moten Quits Bess Role

People's Voice N.Y.

Etta Moten, who has played the title role in the touring Porgy and Bess for several seasons has announced her retirement from the role. Miss Moten made her announcement on arrival in Chicago following the closing of the folk opera in California. The singer plans a long rest and after that perhaps concert work in radio or on the legitimate stage. 2-3-45

New York Times

The Dance Theatre of the Y. M. H. A., Lexington Avenue and Ninety-second Street, has added two repeat performances to its season's schedule. Pearl Primus and her company, who are already booked for an appearance in the subscription series on the afternoon of Feb. 25, will give a second performance that same evening. The Dudley-Maslow-Bales Trio will return for a second appearance on Sunday afternoon, March 25. Both these performances are outside the regular subscription series. 1-11-45

Incidentally, Sybil Shearer has been added to the subscription series and will give a solo recital on the afternoon of March 11.

Famed Dancer Calls Off Deal To Take Place

Amsterdam News N.Y.

Silk Stocking Neighbors Fought Proposed Dance Studio in E. 71st St. 3-17-45

Katherine Dunham, noted exponent of tropical dance moods, has been ousted from her recently purchased $280,000 mansion at 14 East 71st Street.

The dancer put an end to the month old dispute over her rights to occupy the mansion by canceling her purchase contract to the property, Miss Dunham, according to her attorney, Harold J. Sheaham, "voluntarily" gave up her negotiations for the silk stocking residence when it was found that the New York City zoning laws prevented her from turning the house into a dancing studio. 3-17-45

Mr. Sheaham clearly pointed out that Miss Dunham did not want the property if she could not live as well as operate the Dunham School of Dancing at the location. The city residence ordinance was thoroughly investigated by the Sheaham law office. It was found that in the 71st Street area around Park Avenue only schools that award Regents credits are permitted to operate. As the Dunham School is strictly a professional one, it has no status with the New York State Board of Regents and therefore regents credits are not a part of the school's curriculum.

Having cancelled her contract for the home and her money refunded, Miss Dunham is looking for property in the East Seventies schools may operate in this area providing the school is located at least 100 feet from Madison Avenue, according to the city laws.

Spokesmen for the famous jazz artist deny that color or race had anything to do with the cancellation of the contract. This denial was made despite the fact that it was a 71st Street neighbor, Dr. Shorrell, who was instrumental in injecting the zoning laws into the property negotiations. The physician raised strong objections to Miss Dunham's occupancy on the grounds that the dancing school would be a neighborhood nuisance; lower the strictly residential nature of the street and cause a drop in the real estate value to the owners. 3-19-45

When it was announced four weeks ago that Miss Dunham and her white millionaire husband, John Pratt, had purchased the famous Walter Geiberman mansion, the silk stocking 400, including some of the biggest financial and social bigwigs in New York, immediately began protesting and seeking ways to prevent the dancer from getting the final deeds to the house. Dr. Shorrell took the matter to court and tried to prevent her taking over. Justice Bernard Shientag dismissed the injunction proceeding on Feb. 26. 3-19-45

The justice held that Dr. Shorrell's action was motivated by race prejudice and upheld the rights of anyone to buy property regardless of race, creed or color. Miss Dunham, who had been out of town on a dancing tour, arrived in time for the court hearing, and was pleased with the decision. However, further investigation on her part of the city residence law convinced her that she would not be able to use the mansion as a dancing studio.

"After all," said Miss Dunham's secretary, Miss Hamilton, when the Amsterdam News inquired as to whether or not race prejudice had anything to do with the contract cancellation, "what can Miss Dunham do with 25 rooms to live in? She needs a large place for a school. She is looking for another place. It's the law and prejudice has nothing to do with it."

Stokowski to Make Opera of Still's Haitian Theme

AFRO-AMERICAN Baltimore, Md.

NEW YORK.—Leopold Stokowski, famous conductor and director of the City Center of Music and Drama, will produce and conduct an opera, "Troubled Island," written by William Grant Still from a poem by Langston Hughes. The center, composed of a small interracial group headed by Mayor F. H. LaGuardia, has volunteered to raise $30,000 to defray production costs with hopes of presenting the opera this spring.

Mr. Still 1-13-45

Mr. Stokowski, who introduced the work, last year, considers it to be "one of the most inspired expressions of colored art in the United States."

The story takes place in Haiti about the time of the French Revolution and tells of a dictator and a tyrant, who later is overthrown.

Mr. Still recently won a $1000 war bond for composing a jubilee overture for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra which is observing its fiftieth anniversary.

Among other outstanding works by the composer are his opera, "Blue Steel," a ballet, "A Guiablesse"; "Plain Chant for America," and his "In Memoriam of Colored Soldiers Who Died for Democracy," recently premiered by Dr. Artur Rodzinski.

BOSTON SYMPHONY GROUP PERFORMS STILL'S WORKS

BOSTON — Among the classics played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of George Szell, January 19 and 20, were a symphony entitled "In Memoriam to Colored Soldiers," by William G. Still, Los Angeles composer. Afro-American

STILL WINS CINCY SYMPHONY AWARD

Pitts. Courier Pa. 1-6-45

CINCINNATI—William Grant Still, of Los Angeles, noted composer, won the $1,000 War bond offered in Nation-wide competition for writing a jubilee overture celebrating the Cincinnati Symphony orchestra's fiftieth anniversary.

The judges, Eugene Goossens, conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony; Pierre Monteux, San Francisco Symphony conductor, and Deems Taylor, of New York, noted composer, critic and writer, voted unanimously for Mr. Still's work, "The Festive Overture."

A world premier of the composition will be given by the Cincinnati Symphony on January 19 and 20. Thirty-eight other compositions entered. 1-6-45

Mr. Still is the first Negro composer to receive European recognition through performance of his music on a tour conducted by Howard Hanson, director of the Eastman School of Music. He learned to orchestrate by learning how to play instruments.

Dances from Africa

New Masses 4-24-45

A LARGE and respectful audience greeted the program of African dances and modern rhythms sponsored by the African Academy of Arts and Research at Carnegie Hall, April 6. Aimed at tracing the strands of African Negro culture in Western Hemisphere music and dance today, the presentation was notable more in its intention than in actual performance, since no really complete picture can be given in any one evening—or series of evenings for that matter—of the vast pervasive influence African Negro art has had on all the indigenous art forms in North and South America, wherever the Negro was transplanted. At best, a one-night attempt can only be haphazardly selective, which was the result on this particular occasion.

4-24-45

Asadata Dafora, prime exponent in America on African dance, and his group gave another of their pleasant but repetitious folk "operas," *Festival at Batalakor*. Pedro, of the team of Princess Orelia and Pedro, representing Cuba and Brazil (how much is Negro in Brazilian folk dancing, how much native Indian, many of whose rhythms have comparable primitive derivatives?) outshone his luscious partner in real virtuoso dancing. Josephine Premice, who dances and sings Haitian songs, was as always, an ingratiating artist. Another performer was the Calypso singer, the Duke of Iron.

A special program of speeches made the presentation an occasion for honoring two men who have contributed to the welfare of the African peoples, Wendell Willkie and Felix Eboue, late Negro Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa. Raymond E. Baldwin, governor of Connecticut, spoke of the contributions of Willkie, and Prince Nwafor Orizu of the contribution of Felix Eboue. Other speakers included Ozuomba Mbadiwe, president of the African Academy, and L. D. Reddick, curator of the Schomburg Collection of the New York Public Library.

FRANCIS STEUBEN.

Carlotta Franzel Made Good In First Try For Major Role

Norfolk Journal & Guide—Va.

1-13-45

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL AND GUIDE

AT THE Broadway theatre where "Carmen Jones' is currently delighting New York's opera and theatre goers, a slim girl in a pale blue dress comes onstage at about 10:15 each evening and stops the show with a song called "My Joe."

Critics in the first night audience recognized "My Joe' as Micaela's great third act aria in "Carmen," and wondered why they didn't recognize the remarkable coloratura voice of the girl singing it. They found her name in the program — Carlotta Franzel — and the next morning they wrote:

"Carlotta Franzel is in the line of our great Micaelas. She has a lovely voice, rich, warm and packed with emotion." One critic went back for a second hearing and concluded, "As far as I am concerned Carlotta Franzel is the hit of the show. Her acting and singing of Cindy Lou is truly superb . . . her performance is absolutely extraordinary.

FIRST MAJOR ROLE

Carlotta Franzel had never before sung a major role on the opera stage when she scored her sensational success in "Carmen Jones." She was just launching a concert career for which she had worked since her early childhood, when one day she received a phone call asking her to audition for Oscar Hammerstein II and Robert Russell Bennett, the lyricist and the musical director of "Carmen.

To this day Miss Franzel wonders who suggested her name for the audition. Rose pronounced her slender figure and gentle features "just right" for the role of Corporal Joe's loyal country sweetheart, and promptly signed her for the Broadway production.

1-13-45

The air of modest simplicity and sincerity that distinguishes Miss Franzel's bearing, gestures and singing is not assumed for the purpose of her role. As the daughter of a city employee, she was brought up in Pontiac, Mich., in a modest home where music was considered as essential to life as bread.

Although she had been taught to read music at the age of five, piano lessons were impossible until Carlotta was seven. She remembers one winter when there was so little coal in the house, that the living room in which the piano stood was shut off from the rest of the house. All through that winter, she would put on a coat to practice in the cold room, playing until her fingers became stiff. "That winter," she recalls, "all my practicing was done in rather short intervals."

TOOK CARE OF CHILDREN

Her parents found it so much a struggle to provide music lessons that Carlotta devoted her after school hours and summers to taking care of younger children, (at the age of 14 she had an eight-year-old in her charge for the entire summer) and to giving piano lessons to beginners. It was not until she had been singled out repeatedly for vocal solos by her high school music teacher, for whom she played accompaniments at glee club rehearsals, that she thought seriously of studying voice.

In her senior year, finding that it was impossible to earn enough money for singing lessons through jobs after school hours, Carlotta decided to try for an Atwater Kent scholarship. Although she had had no formal training, she felt that she had nothing to lose in trying. When she was announced as the winner of the local contest, she was delighted, but more anxious than ever to learn to sing properly.

1-13-45

As soon as she had graduated from high school, Carlotta took a clerking job in a grocery store and began to help out at home. She had not given up the thought of singing but felt there was nothing else to do under the circumstances.

MET HER YOUNG MAN

Fortunately, in a church choir to which she belonged, she met a young man named Clarence Frisby, who believed in her talent and suggested that she ask for an audition with Dr. William Howland at the Detroit Institute of Musical Arts. Carlotta sang for Dr. Howland became at once a regular student of the Institute and, incidentally, shortly afterward, Mrs. Clarence Frisby.

In the three years Miss Franzel studied at the Institute she appeared as soloist at many Detroit functions, sang at a benefit for the Peace Carillon Fund, played the high priestess in a performance of "Aida" given by the Detroit Negro Opera Company, and gave a recital sponsored by the Federation of Women's Clubs.

1-13-45

In New York, while studying with Frank LeForge, Miss Franzel was named one of hundreds to be auditioned for a Ford Sunday Evening Hour guest broadcast. She won the final competition and in September, 1941, sang both opera arias and songs in the nationwide broadcast.

After her radio success, concert engagements began to follow in more rapid sucession.

TOWN HALL DEBUT

With a program of Bash, Handel, Brahms, and Mozart songs, Carlotta Franzel made her Town Hall debut the following year. Again the critics referred to her as "a remarkable young artist," and the Tribune's reviewer wrote, "Miss Franzel has one of those natural voices and temperaments which destine their owners for important places in the music world."

1-13-45

Shortly afterward came her success in "Carmen Jones," which Miss Franzel attributes to her teacher, Marshall Bryant. Miss Franzel is, in fact, grateful to several people for the success she has won. She is thankful to her parents for the musical training they worked so long to provide; to her brothers — George, a sergeant with the U. S. Army Engineers in the Pacific and Fred, an infantry sergeant in England — for encouraging her to sing; to her husband, without whom her career would have been impossible, and even to her little daughter, who sees her mother less often than both would like.

1-13-45

REMAINS MODEST

Although newspapers and magazines such as "Life," "Newsweek" and "Esquire" have sung Miss Franzel's praises across the nation, she remains as gentle, modest and unassuming as when she first left Michigan for New York.

Nevertheless there is something that sets Carlotta Franzel apart. She seems to be aware of some debt that she owes for the extraordinary voice and talent that are hers. She has set herself an even higher musical goal for the future, and those who have heard her sing are certain that the young soprano will achieve it.

Setting Record at Roxy

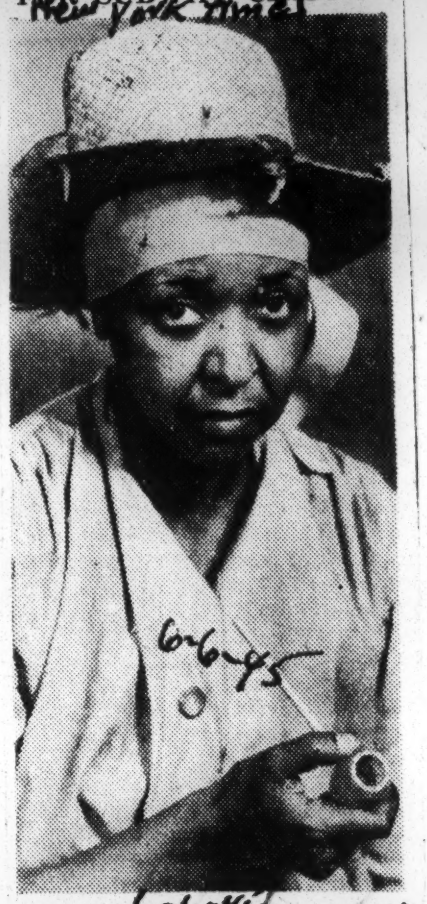
Afro-American

4-14-45

HAZEL SCOTT,
former piano star at Cafe Society, soon to be seen in Warner Bros.' "Rhapsody in Blue," makes her fifth appearance in fifteen months at the Roxy Theatre in New York next week. In October, she'll embark on a concert tour.

FOR SUBWAY CIRCUIT

New York Times



6-6-45

Ethel Waters as she appears in "Mamba's Daughters," in which she scored a personal success on Broadway six years ago. The Flatbush (Brooklyn) will receive the revival next Tuesday; the Windsor (Bronx) on June 19.

88b-1945

Musicals

OPERATION 805—Billy Carter, Ida James, Johnny Hudgins and Ann Butler, members of USO Camp Shows Unit No. 805, who have gone on another jaunt thousands of miles away to entertain the men and women of the American armed forces, are shown here just before they left for San Francisco. In a cablegram from Ann Butler, received last Friday, she informs the press that the company of Broadway favorites have arrived in Hawaii.—Photo by Irvin Glaser. 12-22-45

African Dance Festival To Play In Norfolk Dec. 17 and 18

Journal-Guide

NORFOLK — Asadata Dafora, world famous African dancer, and his company of 35 singers, dancers and musicians, will head the program of the "Festival of Dance and Music" which the African Academy of Arts and Research will present for two evenings—Monday, Dec. 17, and Tuesday, Dec. 18 at the Norfolk USO Auditorium. 12-15-45

Dafora's brilliant presentation, "Festival at Battalakor," which won paeans of praise from critics all over the country when it was shown at Carnegie Hall last spring, will be the feature of his section of the presentation.

This traced the evolution from African dances and music to modern rhythms through numbers offered by noted stars.

Among those who have already Pedro, outstanding Brazilian dance artists.

Norfolk, Va.

17TH CENTURY)

Set in West Africa of the 17th century, "Festival at Battalakor," through the medium of its dances and songs, rendered by beautfiul voices in solos and chorus and accompanied by thrilling drum beats, tells the story of the life of a happy African village torn asunder by the descent of the slave-dealers, who take away many of its inhabitants from their loved ones. Comedy, pathos, and sheer beauty combine in fine dramatic effect to create the atmosphere and convey the meaning of the tale.

Its numbers include "The Presentation of Gifts," with Dafora and company taking part; "Dance of Appreciation," by Dafora; a thrilling spear dance, depicting the strength and acrobatic agility of the young warriors; a beautiful "Dance of Joy" by the feminine members of the company, Dafora's famous "Bell Dance' and a delightful "Festival dance."

The exquisite and exciting songs which Dafora brought here from his West African home, and the wonderful and unrivalled rhythms of his drum orchestra, make "Festival at Battalakor" unrivalled art and entertainment, something to live in the memory of audiences for many years.

ASADATA DAFORA

FIRST COMPLETE TOUR

This is the first time that the African Academy of Arts and Research has sent one of its festival presentations on tour in such complete form. If successful, it will probably initiate a continuous tour each year of the annual event staged by the Academy in New York City. 12-15-45

This series began in December, 1944. At that time, John Martin, leading dance critic of the country, wrote in the New York Times: "The Academy could scarcely have chosen a more persuasive medium for initating its program of mutual understanding."

Hazel Gets Rave Reviews

Journal & Guide

Norfolk, Va.

12-8-45

NEW YORK, N. Y.—(NNPA)—Francis D. Perkins, music critic of the New York Herald Tribune, commented as follows on the recital of Miss Hazel Scott at Carnegie Hall Nov. 26: "Hazel Scott played classic and romantic music both straight and with infusions of swing in her recital last night at Carnegie Hall."

He added: "The well known pianist also figured as a composer, opening the porgram with her opening the program with her boogie-woogie work, 'A Tale of Four Cities.' 12-8-45

"Miss Scott is well known as an interpreter of popular music, and can swing the classics—or, rather, according to last night's program note, present them in modern tempo—deftly; but, judging by her performances of music by Scarlatti, Bach, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Favel and De Falla, she is considerably less at home in straight concert music. Her fingers flow swiftly, but she semed to have little idea of the expressive purport of these works. After a Scarlatti sonata in C minor, played with some unusual rubati, she gave an impression of featuring speed, and, to a waxing degree, loudness, at the expenses of other musical considerations.

"The curtain rose after the intermission to disclose three instrumentalists, whom Miss Scott introduced as Wilmore 'Slick' Jones, who played the drums; Edgar Brown, who played the double-bass, and Eugene Cedric, who played the tenor saxophone and clarinet. One of the themes of their opening improvisation was from Gregg's 'Peer Gynt' music. Miss Scott then played a medley based on music of George Gershwin and Jerome Kern, and in this, as well as in her 'Passion Suite,' fared much better than she had in the classic and romantic groups. She then went on to swinging music of Bach. Liszt and Chopin.

"The 'Passion Suite,' it was noted, depicted the last days of the life of Christ, woven around Negro spirituals, and the work might be described as presentations of and elaborations upon these tunes. The composer-pianist was welcomed by a good-sized audience."

'Bojangles' Brings Revue Here Tonight

Richmond, Va.

Times Dispatch

When Bill (Bojangles) Robinson flashes his big grin and dances the steps which have made him famous the world around tonight at the Mosque, it will be his first hometown show in several years.

"Bojangles" will bring with him a concert revue featuring Ada Brown, who was seen lately in "Stormy Weather" with Lena Horne, the Four Knights, Claretta Freeman, singer, and Harry Swanigan and Maurice Graham, pianists. Curtain time is 8:30.

The nimble-footed "Bojangles," grandson of a slave, was born in Richmond 67 years ago at 915 North Third St. Many of his old friends in Richmond remember how he used to shell peas at the Sixth Street Market and how he learned to donce on the steps of a police station that once stood at Sixth and Marshall Streets. 12-13-45

He visited his birthplace for the last time in August, but he has never been very far away from his hometown in affection.

Loves Richmond

"I love Richmond," Bill said on his last visit. "You know there's something about your home town that just makes you feel different from any other place in the world." Evidence of his regard for his home town is the traffic light at the intersection of Adams and Leigh Streets which he had erected to safeguard Negro school children.

Tonight at the Mosque Bill plans six routines, and probably a good many encores for the large house which is expected to see him. He will do a symphonic soft shoe, waltz clog and tap demonstration in the first half and a soft shoe, tap routine and "Forty Years From Now" novelty after the intermission.

Ada Brown, who has her own special delivery of blues songs, is scheduled to sing, "I Ain't Got Nothin' But the Blues," "Laziest Gal in Town," "Stormy Weather," "Evalina," "'Tain't Right" and "Georgia on My Mind."

WILLIAM GARY (BUNK) JOHNSON

To Give His First Concert at Town Hall Tuesday for Yugoslav Relief

"Bunk" Johnson's first concert will be presented at Town Hall, Tues., Jan. 1, at 8:30 p.m. The concert is sponsored by the American Committee for Yugoslav Relief.

Orson Welles will serve as master of ceremonies and narrator for the concert which will pay tribute to "the cradle of Jazz," New Orleans.

In addition to Johnson and his band, many other jazz and folk music notables will take part in the affair at Hown Hall—among them Josh White, Hank Duncan, Fred Moore, Big Bill Bronzy and others.

Individual sponsors of the "New Orleans" concert include Leonard Bernstein, Olin Downes, Aaron Copland, Eli Siegmeister, Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw, Frank Sinatra and others.

Hot Trumpet

Sixty-five-year-old 'Bunk' Johnson has staged one of the grandest comebacks in music. In 1938, this man whose name is holy to jazz fans and musicians, was driving a truck in the harvest fields for a buck seventy-five a day. Store teeth and a horn have brought him back for those who like their jazz 'New Orleans style.'

The Worker New York, N.Y.

By BETH McHENRY

IN 1938 in New Iberia, Louisiana, a man whose name was almost holy to jazz musicians throughout the country, was driving a truck in the harvest fields for a dollar seventy-five a day.

William Gary, "Bunk" Johnson, whom Louis Armstrong as a child followed around the streets of New Orleans, was down and out and had been for several years. He lived obscurely, sweating out his days and whistling for parties at night. N.Y. N.Y.

For "Bunk" Johnson had lost his teeth, and a man without teeth cannot play a trumpet, and if a man's poor enough the buying of new teeth becomes an impossibility, and that's what happened to "Bunk" Johnson, even while he was being written up in music magazines throughout the country as one of the great pioneers of jazz.

Armstrong had told of how Johnson had taught him his music and the great King Oliver had called "Bunk" one of the greatest of all musicians—but "Bunk" had no money to pay for having one Today on the East Side of New York powerful, and his band goes back to the himself was nowhere to be found. Jazz taken. He told how he had been "real in a critics and fans all over the country were down for five years. My teeth went bad vesan trying to discover what had happened to in 1934 so that was my finish playing Bard "Bunk" whose music was remembered music. I am just about to give it up. that's after years of silence. Finally Louis Arm- Now I haven't got no other way to go." strong suggested that a letter be sent to A collection was taken up for teeth many New Iberia, and through the postmaster for "Bunk" Johnson and Louis Armstrong men there he was at last located.

The letter asked "Bunk" Johnson for was out Johnson, a man in his sixties, citing his picture and he wrote back that he was once more in the center of the world jazz, he loves—music.

in a modest ball room called the Stuy- first popular jazz for its numbers—to vesant Casino, "Bunk" Johnson and his Margie and The Shiek and Oh Lady Be Band play every night to an audience Good. And "Bunk's" Band does the beau- that's a strange mixture of jazz fans and tiful spirituals of the Negro people and critics and fellow musicians and many Creole folk songs and music from the many soldiers and sailors. The service- New Orleans Street Parade. men keep coming back, they say, because "Bunk" Johnson's Band is like him- "Bunk" Johnson's music is the most ex- self, a collection of some of the finest citing around. "Bunk" Johnson's is pure musicians ever to come out of the Cradle Jazz, the critics say, uncluttered and of Jazz. He gathered them together in sent him a trumpet and before the year

New Orleans for the recordings his friends up north begged him to do. And the band, with a couple of exceptions, is the same today. 12-30-45

"Bunk," who is 65, is the oldest, but the others are men of upward years, hard working men whose music for the most part was something they just loved so much they had to keep making it despite fatigue and poverty and other evils that beset men.

There's Jim Robinson, the trombone player, who worked in a shipyard all during the war. And George Lewis, the clarinet, who's a longshoreman. And Lawrence Marrero, the banjo player, who is a skilled painter and roofer as well. Alicde Pavageau (Slow Drag) the base player was an itinerant musician until recently, himself and his wife making up a duet that kept them eating and gave folks pleasure. The only one in the band who has been a professional musician all of his working life is Alton Purnell, the piano. Purnell, who is 34, is the youngest member of the band. 12-30-45

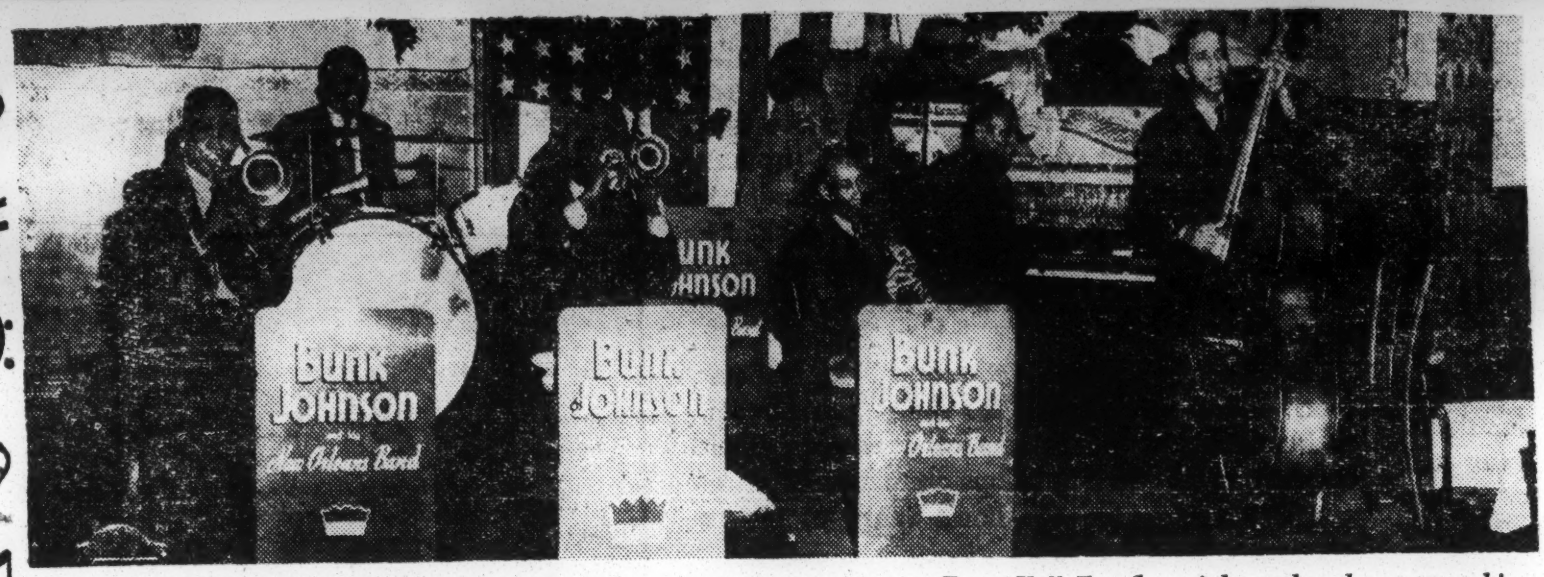
"Bunk" Johnson himself was born in New Orleans 65 years ago. His mother kept a restaurant and she sympathized with his leanings toward music and sent him early for lessons. His professor saw the great talent in this lad of seven and according to "Bunk" told him he "had a long way to go and a short time to make it in."

At 15 "Bunk" Johnson was playing in Adam Olivier's Band in New Orleans and a year later he went with the immortal Buddy Bolden's Ragtime Band, the talk of New Orleans in the nineties. There followed years of playing with other bands and making a deep and lasting impression on the rising young artists of jazz. These younger musicians, many of them, left the South, but "Bunk" wanted to stay on there. He would give the words of his friend King Oliver for his reason, "so I can drive the blues down." So it never occurred to him to follow the money trail, music was his deep love and New Orleans was its source, with its rich background of blended races and international culture. When his teeth went bad, it never occurred to him to do other than what he did, try to make a living the best way possible and keep living his music "inside." N.Y. N.Y

In San Francisco a couple of years ago, a group of jazz lovers sent for "Bunk" Johnson and he went there to play in concerts. On Sunday afternoons he was always to be found at the Jam Session in the CIO building on Golden Gate Ave. Longshore leader Harry Bridges was not only a fan of "Bunk" Johnson's but an old friend and shipmate. The two had met years before out in Australia when "Bunk" spent a couple of years on ships.

Early this year "Bunk" Johnson came to New York and his friends arranged the Stuyvesant Casino job for him. The band played to an empty house for a short time only. Within a month the news of "Bunk" Johnson's Band had swept the town and now on a Saturday night there's no pushing your way into the place. Weekend crowds hit 500. The small hall downstairs was exchanged for the big one upstairs. Some of the young people who come there dance while they listen to "Bunk." The band likes that. We're not on exhibition, "Bunk" himself says, it makes us feel good when people dance.

On Jan. 1 there's a big event facing "Bunk" Johnson and his Band. They're going up to Town Hall for their first big concert. It's a benefit for Yugoslav Relief.



"Bunk" Johnson and his band. They'll give their first concert at Town Hall Tuesday night under the sponsorship of the American Committee for Yugoslav Relief. —(The Worker photos).

Vulgarized 'Uncle Tom' Play Goes On; Bridgeport Furious

The Daily Worker New York, New York
(Date) 10-1-45

By SAMUEL SILLEN

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., Sept. 30.—The musical version of Uncle Tom's Cabin which opened last night proved to be a vulgar distortion of the anti-slavery novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe and a crude slander on the Negro people.

Jasper MacLevy, Bridgeport Social-Democratic Mayor, insisted that this monstrosity be performed at the Kline Memorial Auditorium. The auditorium is operated by the city for "cultural advancement."

MacLevy was on hand to greet those playgoers who crossed a picket line of 30 delegates from Bridgeport labor and civic organizations, including the CIO, the Pastors' Association, the NAACP, the AFL Central Labor Union, the Communist Party and the interdenominational Friendship, Freedom and Unity League.

I received the consent of picket marshall William Calnan to cover the performance for the Daily Worker.

SMALL ATTENDANCE

Only a quarter of the hall was filled, despite the wide newspaper publicity. The entire balcony was closed. Needless to say, there were no Negroes in the audience.

The stage proceedings are not worth reporting from a theatre point of view. I have never suffered through such a hammy, boring production.

More serious, however, was the social effect, which was to ridicule those characters who were done up in black face according to the cheapest Jimcrow minstrel tradition. The show started with two end-men in the "Bones and Sambo" manner. The alleged Negro characters plucked banjos and rattled tambourines.

Uncle Tom was portrayed as a servile buffoon, Topsy as a "happy-go-lucky" clown, the white plantation owner as a model of Christian charity.

It is for good reason that the show has been withdrawn in New Haven, Waterbury, Springfield and Worcester.

And, judging from the reactions of the Brdigeport citizens to whom I spoke, Mayor MacLevy will have to answer for palming it off on Bridgeport despite widespread, progressive protest.

Frank Giarelli, secretary of the local CIO, told me, "We oppose holding up any race to ridicule. This play distorts the original novel. Particularly after the war when interracial unity is urgently needed, we must speak out against such distortions in this or any other stage presentation."

AFL ANGERED

Pete Bernard, president of the AFL's Bridgeport Council, said, "MacLevy's statement that the play would go on was a bombshell. He consulted nobody." Mr. Bernard, an old backstand hand, travelled with an Uncle Tom's Cabin troupe twenty years ago, when John L. Sullivan, the famous boxer played Simon Legree.

"Why do they pick this time to revive it?" he asked.

A Negro sailor on the picket line carried this sign, "We fought this war for dignity and self respect. This play offends both."

A placard borne by a woman picket read, "Mrs. Stowe wrote the novel to foster freedom. This play does the opposite."

Mayor MacLevy told me he had no comment to make.

* * *

RODMAN'S STATEMENT came shortly after Mayor McLevy had expressed the opinion that the comptroller had made "a mistake" in canceling Uncle Tom despite the opposition of the Bridgeport Industrial Union Council (CIO), Negro community leaders, the Communist party and the Bridgeport Pastors Association.

Commenting on a recent telegram he received from the American Civil Liberties Union, in which he was urged to revoke the ban on the performance, the mayor said:

"So far as the administration is concerned there is no official ban in this city on 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' I think it was a mistake to cancel it and I feel the opposition is doing a disservice to the colored people of Bridgeport and putting them in a false light."

Rodman asserted he accepted full responsibility for the cancellation and in his opinion, the show does not merit censure. He added the ban had meant refunding $1,300 collected in advance sale of tickets.

As for the ban on a musical "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in Bridgeport, its opponents, clergymen, union leaders, and Negro spokesmen—and particularly the last—presumably disliked the evocation of a hateful and degraded past; Uncle Tom was a slave and the Negro people have been free for more than eighty years.

But there again Pravda might get an idea of what people in America mean by freedom. The Marxians are always talking about "wage slaves" under the capitalist lash just like the Uncle Toms under the whip of Simon Legree; but the other day there was a picture of an Okie family, their war work in California at an end, starting out for home. Theirs was a far, far better automobile than the one described by Mr. Steinbeck, and apparently the Okie wage slaves had the gas for which the bourgeoisie in the neighborhood of Merritt Parkway was still waiting at that moment. Such is wage slavery as Pravda sees it and freedom as we see it.

Bridgeport Officials Divided On Canceling Of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'

The News-Birmingham, Ala., 9-22-45

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., Sept. 27—(AP)—Answering Socialist Mayor Jasper McLevy's declaration that so far as the administration is concerned, there is no official ban in this city on "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Comptroller Perry W. Rodman explained today that the show was canceled to avoid trouble.

Rodman, managing director of Klein Memorial, a civic auditorium governed by the Bridgeport Library Board, banned the musical version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel of slave days in the South, last Saturday. The show had been scheduled here for Sept. 28.

Said Rodman: "There had been definite threats of picketing made to me and members of the Library Board, and rather than have the risk of irresponsible persons doing damage to innocent women and children who purchased tickets, I decided to heed the pressure brought on me and canceled the engagement."

Drama Critic Defends 'Uncle Tom' Travesty

Daily Worker N.Y., N.Y.
10-8-45

By SAMUEL SILLEN

WITH his many years of experience in the theatre, John Mason Brown should long ago have learned the perils of reviewing a play without seeing it. Yet I find Mr. Brown this week gallantly leading with his chin by supporting a production which obviously never had the benefit of personal scrutiny. He defends the musical version of **Uncle Tom's Cabin** in his drama column in the current **Saturday Review of Literature.** The standing title of the column is "Seeing Things."

Mr. Brown is disturbed because a number of progressive labor and civic groups in Bridgeport protested the showing of the musical **Uncle Tom's Cabin** in the municipal auditorium. He learnedly cites the anti-slavry impact of the original novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe, and he asks indignantly: "If even the past is not to be allowed to speak honestly for itself, one wonders where freedom of speech comes in, for which men have so recently been dying."

I wish Brown had gone along to Bridgeport to see the production. He might have been less careless about allowing history to speak "honestly" for itself. For this show is completely dishonest. It is a travesty on Mrs. Stowe's novel. It revives the most stupid devices of the Jimcrow minstrel tradition with its tambourines and banjos, its endmen, its "Bones and Sambo," its barbaric make-up.

Mr. Brown's concern for historical honesty and his sense of indebtedness to Harriet Beecher Stowe should have led him to join those who protested this musical monstrosity. Instead, he reads a condescending lecture to the "misinformed" and "ill-advised" people who were putting up a fight for human decency.

* * *

IN RAISING the issue of civil liberties, Mr. Brown betrays a dangerous, unfortunately widespread confusion. He compared those who picketed the show to Nazi bookburners. He warns grimly of "ignorance and bigotry." He says that Roger Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union have said the "final word" when they command us to "tolerate all themes." 10-8-45

Now if we really mean civil liberties and are not mouthing abstract phrases, let us get down to cases. As Mr. Brown is no doubt aware, the phrase civil liberties may have an ironic ring in a community where race tensions and frictions are deliberately cultivated by fascists. In the real world, which even the newspapers to a certain extent reflect, the battle for freedom includes the battle against hate-mongers inciting against Negroes, Jews, and other minorities.

The effect of the phony work which Mr. Brown defends is to slander and ridicule Negroes. It feeds the flames of prejudice. To present it in a municipal-operated auditorium is an affront and a threat not only to the Negro citizens of the community but to the community as a whole.

Is one a "bookburner" if one exercises a constitutional right to protest the one-man decision of Mayor Jasper MacLevy that the show must go on, come hell, highwater, or the happiness of Bridgeport's citizens?

* * *

A RELATED problem has arisen in New York with regard to the circulation of anti-Semitic stories in high school textbooks. The Teachers Union has asked for the discontinuance of a volume which ncludes Chaucer's **The Prioress' Tale** "which violates the fundamental conceptions of Americanism by a blanket condemnation of all Jews."

No doubt some literary columnist will now rush to a learned defense of Chaucer and, like John Mason Brown, piously quote Roger Baldwin. Chaucer needs no defense as one of the supreme writers in our language. In many respects he represents some of the most advanced thinking of his 14th century. But he also reflected the barbarities of his age, and he repeated uncritically the medieval myths of Christ-killing, ritual murder by Jews. 10-8-45

To circulate these stupid atrocity stories in the schoolroom is school texts is not a violation of free speech; it is an intelligent way to evaluate slanders and superstitions regarding our Jewish population. In demanding a "thorough examination of all works, a selection whose effect is to breed distrust and animosity approved books to weed out those which directly or indirectly or by inexcusable. It represents a careless selection from Chaucer's copious of fighting bigotry. In any racial or religious group," the Teachers among the children. It contributes to the outrageous flareups of implication slander any r
Union is acting in a respon

"Carib Song" Lacks Speed, Gaiety; "Sleep Baby, Don't Cry", Hit Tune

Pemplee Farce 10-6-45

N.Y., N.Y.

By FREDI WASHINGTON

"Carib Song," Katherine Dunham's newest legitimate venture which opened at the Aldephi theatre last Thursday night, turned out to be equally as dull and depressing as the heavy muggy weather outside. A book on the West Indies by William Archibald, who is a native of that interesting country, music by Baldwin Bergerson, the Dunham dancers, William Franklin, Avon Long and finally Miss Dunham herself, are a good enough combination to lead one to expect a gay colorful evening's entertainment.

Unfortunately, "Carib Song," never jells. There are a few good tunes, some good sets and some exciting dancing by Miss Dunham's well-trained group when it is allowed to take over stage. The book which deals with the eternal triangle—the husband, played by William Franklin; the woman, played by Katherine Dunham, and the fisherman, played by Avon Long—is dull, tediously uninteresting and gets in the way of what action the show does have to offer. Most of the dialogue was unintelligible and for the most part, badly staged. 10-6-45

Miss Dunham occupied the stage a goodly part of the evening and far too many times in a studied reclining position, while Avon Long, who stopped an easily stopped show, with "Woman Is a Rascal," had little else to do but make a series of entrance and exits on and off stage. William Franklin was bogged down with one monologue after another, none of which I understood, but he managed to get that beautiful voice of his over, in one of two fair songs. Harriet Jackson sang with beauty and good voice production, the one song we suspect to be a hit—"Sleep Baby, Don't Cry." It is haunting, plaintive and easily remembered. 10-6-45

In the final of the first act the dancers get their one big chance and they take full advantage of the opportunity. They dance the "Shango" (a snake ritual), with complete abandon and beauty. Tommy Gomez typifies the snake with an amazing and supple grace. The music is interestingly arranged and played well by the orchestra under the direction of Pembroke Davenport.

We lament the fact that "Carib Song" fell so short of what was expected, but then that is show business. Nothing ventured, nothing gained is an old adage of the theatre.

[*Musical play by William Archibald; music by Baldwin Bergersen; lyrics by William Archibald; book directed by Mary Hunter; choreography by Katherine Dunham; scenery by Jo Mielziner; costumes designed by Motley; musical director Pembroke Davenport; orchestrations by Ted Royal; presented by George Stanton at the Adelphi Theatre, Thursday, September 27, 1945*]. 10-6-45

CAST

The Singer - - - Harriet Jackson
The Friends - - - Eulabel Riley
Mary Lewis
The Fat Woman
Mabel Sanford Lewis
THe Tall Woman
Mercedes Gilbert
The Husband - William Franklin
The Fisherman - - - Avon Long
The Woman - Katherin Dunham
The Fishwoman-Elsie Benjamin
The Madras Seller-Byron Cuttler
The Shango Priest
La Rosa Estrada
The Boy Possessed
By a Snake - Tommy Gomez

CARIB SONG, a musical play starring Katherine Dunham, with score by Baldwin Bergersen, book and lyrics by William Archibald, presented by George Stanton at the Adalphi. Cast includes Avon Long, William Franklin, Harriet Jackson, Mabel Sanford Lewis, Mercedes Gilbert and Elsie Benjamin; staged by Mary Hunter; choreography by Katherine Dunham; scenery by Jo Mielziner; costumes by Motley; musical director, Pembroke Davenport.

10-18-45

KATHERINE DUNHAM

man (Avon Long). The unhappy romance ends in murder. It is a thin thread on which to string the dances of Katherine Dunham and the songs by Baldwin Bergersen and William Archibald. N.Y.N.Y

One prefers to dwell on the scattered excellent moments. One of these is provided by Avon Long, who literally stops the show with "Woman Is a Rascal." Mr. Long, who also gave an outstanding performance in last season's Memphis Bound, is a supple dancer, a mischievous comic artist. Why he was not given other good numbers is one of the mysteries of this curiously disorganized production.

SWEET CLEAR VOICE

Another fine moment is the singing of **Sleep, Baby, Don't Cry** by Harriet Johnson, whose amazingly sweet clear voice does wonders with a melodic tune. Miss Johnson captured audiences with her singing of **Summertime** in the Cheryl Crawford version of **Porgy and Bess.** She repeats her success in **Carib Song.** 10-18-45

William Franklin carries much of the singing burden, but his real strength is felt only in **You Know, Oh Lord,** an impassioned spiritual.

'Carib Song' Bogs Down Excellent Negro Cast

New York, N.Y.

By SAMUEL SILLEN Daily Worker

Despite the valiant efforts of a fine Negro cast headed by Katherine Dunham, **Carib Song** is a disappointment. For this musical play of the West Indies gets bogged down in a singularly dull book by William Archibald. The good moments in the show stand out boldly in the slow, rambling succession of scenes.

This is the tale of a West Indian woman (Miss Dunham) who turned from her stuffy husband (William Franklin) to a more poetic fisherman (Avon Long). The unhappy romance ends in murder. It is a thin thread on which to string the dances of Katherine Dunham and the songs by Baldwin Bergersen and William Archibald.

One prefers to dwell on the scattered excellent moments. One of these is provided by Avon Long, who literally stops the show with "Woman Is a Rascal." Mr. Long, who also gave an outstanding performance in last season's Memphis Bound, is a supple dancer, a mischievous comic artist. Why he was not given other good numbers is one of the mysteries of this curiously disorganized production.

Katherine Dunham, who has an awkward acting role, has based her dances on her studies in the West Indies, and choreographically the show reaches its high point in the **Shango Ritual** number. But Miss Dunham fails to communicate her native materials effectively. The pressures of Broadway, which likes to play up the "exotic," have evidently had their effect on the folk idiom which might have given this production the richness and significance it fails to achieve.

Many opportunities have been lost in **Carib Song.** Once again, as several times last season, we have a musical which fails to do justice to the talents of outstanding Negro artists. It seems a pity that they should be burdened with a boring mixture of "atmosphere," sentimentalism, and mere confusion.

'Uncle Tom's Cabin' Banned

Kansas City, Mo.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—A musical version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin", scheduled for the Orpheum theater next Monday, was barred this week by Mayor John W. Kapp because of protests by the N.A.A.C.P. branch here.

Dr. D. E. Webster, president of the branch, said: "The characters of the play portray the subtle, illiterate and subservient type of Negro and the play would not help the present racial relations which have been built up by our organization. The characters are portrayed by white people which makes for more likelihood of exaggeration". 10-26-45

The theater manager said that 1,000 tickets had been sold which would have to be refunded.

Musical

All Negro Variety Show

Daily Worker 5-24-45

Blue Holiday, the new variety show at the Belasco, is crammed with talent. With its brilliant headliners, this all-Negro review should have been a big event in the theater. But an injustice has been done to such top performers as Ethel Waters, Josh White, Mary Lou Williams, and the Hall Johnson choir. They are handicapped by a hastily conceived and roughly patched-up vehicle that fails to carry the freshness and pace of their abundant gifts.

It is good, in any case, to welcome Ethel Waters back to Broadway. She is unhappily wasted in the first act, where she does two sentimental and quite irrelevant scenes from **Mamba's Daughters** (the Dubose and Dorothy Hayward success of 1939). But she is marvelously expressive later on in the encores of **Stormy Weather, My Man, Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,** and **Cabin in the Sky.** Miss Waters effortlessly acts her songs with great humor and pathos.

DEEPLY FELT BLUES

5-25-45

Josh White carries a good part of the first act (after which he unfortunately disappears) with his always deeply felt blues and worksongs. White brings the only glimmer of thematic significance to the show with such favorites as **The House I Live in** and **Free and Equal Blues,** the latter of which one is especially glad to hear in a Broadway theater. But this delightfully pertinent satire on racist bigotry (Earl Robinson's music and E. Y. Harburg's lyrics) is unfortunately muffed in the staging. White brought down the house with the now legendary **One Meat Ball.**

Mary Lou Williams' boogie-woogie is fascinating as always, and the Hall Johnson Choir, after giving the most stirring pre-curtain National Anthem I have ever heard, does fine interpretations of **St. Louis Blues, I Got a Mule,** and **Fare Ye Well.**

5-25-45

HAITIAN DANCES

The distinctive dances by the Katherine Dunham group include **Voodoo in Haiti** and **Fiji Island.** A group of Haitian songs and dances by Josephine Premice has great charm, and Miss Premice deservedly wins the affection of the audience. Incidental dance numbers are performed with too obvious energy by The Chocolateers and The Three Poms.

A wealth of talent, and Willie Bryant and Timmie Rogers strive valiantly as joint masters of ceremonies to keep things moving. But the movement is sporadic; it lacks design. Somebody has made the mistake of trying to put together a show with scissors and paste. The distinguished Negro artists here represented deserve a far less sloppy production. The vastly rich resources of Negro theater are only spottily tapped in **Blue Holiday.**

'Pinafore' Boogie-Woogie

Richmond Times

H. M. S. PINAFORE, that gem of delightful foolishness which MESSRS. GILBERT and SULLIVAN bequeathed to posterity, is being produced in guises these days which may be causing something like apoplexy in the ranks of oldtime, blown-in-the-bottle Savoyards. Only a few days ago, Richmond's high-stepping "BILL" ROBINSON was the star performer in *Memphis Bound*, a swing version of *Pinafore* with an all-Negro cast, whose premiere on Broadway evoked high praise from the critics. And now come the well-nigh incredible tidings that the libretto of the same GILBERT and SULLIVAN operetta is being rewritten from beginning to end by GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

5-30-45

We recall that "BOJANGLES" ROBINSON was his old bullient self in *The Hot Mikado* nearly a decade ago, and the fact should have prepared us for jitterbug versions of the other GILBERT and SULLIVAN masterpieces. Now, at 67, "BOJANGLES" is as "hot" as ever. In the portion of *Memphis Bound* which stays close to the *Pinafore* words and music, he is the "monarch of the sea." This part of the plot revolves about the efforts of a group of players who are giving *Pinafore* to raise enough money to get their river boat off a mud bank. Then in the latter section, heavily given over to boogie-woogie, "BILL" is a jailed river man.

5-30-45

In *Memphis Bound* we are provided with a jazzed-up version of the GILBERT and SULLIVAN original, whereas GEORGE KAUFMAN contemplates a faithful adherence to the SULLIVAN music, while substituting the KAUFMAN cerebrations for those of W. S. GILBERT. Maybe this latter dish will jell, and in view of the liberties which have been taken with the same original by "BILL" ROBINSON, et al., almost anything of the sort now seems somewhat less than outrageous. MR. KAUFMAN is a veteran of light opera with *Of Thee I Sing* and *I'd Rather Be Right* as two salient examples of his talent.

Reports Move Underfoot To Block Sepia Artists

Pittsburgh Courier 5-12-45

By HERMAN HILL

HOLLYWOOD—A campaign of undetermined origin, assertedly based on "racisms" and aimed at the elimination of Negro entertainers and orchestras in Hollywood cafes and night clubs, is continually being waged according to authoritative information received by The Courier's Pacific Coast offices here.

Latest form taken by proponents is a protest petition being circulated by unknown persons and seeking the signatures of business persons and property owners.

Principal target of those who would make Hollywood "lily white" is Billy Berg's "Carnegie Hall" on Vine Street, near Sunset Boulevard, where Eddie Heywood is presently the featured attraction.

The club was granted a liquor license under bitter protest of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. It was denied a dance permit however by the Los Angeles police commission.

5-12-45

OWNER HAS LIBERAL POLICY

Berg is the former owner of the Swing Club of Hollywood Boulevard. His has been a policy of featuring race entertainment and welcoming Negro patronage. This has given rise to protests on the part of Hollywood civic factions which assertedly feared the consequences of "mixing."

According to Berg, the Chamber of Commerce headed by John Kingsley, has denied any implications in current efforts to halt the usage of Negro bands.

Illinois Jacquet concluded an engagement at the Swing Club and was replaced by a white combo, this despite the fact that Jacquet proved one of the best drawing cards in the club's history. Swing Club owners have since been allegedly "congratulated" for their change of entertainment policy.

While Berg has labeled fascist groups as furnishing much of the opposition to his policy, he said he had experienced a share of difficulty with Negro entertainers and patrons concerning their behavior.

Ethel Acclaimed; 'Blue Holiday' Lukewarm Opus

Pittsburgh Courier 6-2-45

NEW YORK—"Blue Holiday," the Irving Shapiro and Doris Cole offering, formerly referred to as the "Wishing Tree," opened at the Belasco Theatre the other night. The show brings back Ethel Waters, who proves that she still knows how to put over a song, is still very, very Ethel Waters, and still possesses her stage magnetism.

She came on with the bumps, kicks and whatnot in a spontaneous dance, which was nice, but need she have danced? It was her singing that held the audience enthralled and begging for more. Josh White with his falsetto part-yodel-part-blues style of singing accounted for himself in splendid form. The Katherine Dunham Dancers, with Josephine Premice had the most exciting spot on the show. A young man, Timmie Rogers, with a lot of energy and a grin as big as the moon, gave a zip to the slow pace.

6-2-45

The Hall Johnson Choir was as usual par excellence. The Chocolateers and the Tree Poms were thrown in for good measure—which made the measure quite full indeed. Mary Lou Williams' fine boogie-woogie piano playing didn't seem to impress the audience, which perhaps was more accustomed to more shoulder shaking than La Williams gives out.

Several changes were made in the show in an effort to liven it up on its loose joints, among which was the deletion of the dramatic scene. However, the show still is loose, slow, and lacks continuity, although the individual acts are entertaining.

The show is staged by Monroe B. Hack, with Perry Watkins designing and supervising. Costumes are done by Kasia.

Bill Good, But Critics Vary On 'Memphis Bound'

Pittsburgh Courier

NEW YORK — Following are excerpts from reviews on "Memphis Bound," which opened at the Broadway Theatre, starring Bill Robinson:

Lewis Nichols in the New York Times says: "With an all-Negro cast and with caution thrown casually to the four winds, 'Memphis Bound' generally is a cheerful and active show. It has fast dancing, Don Walker's orchestrations to gild the lily of Sir Arthur's music and last—and not unimportant to the business at hand—Bill Robinsno as the star . . . In getting his music together Mr. Walker has taken most of the well known songs of the original and has produced something best described by a lyric to one of the tunes—"Pinafore," eight to the bar. Part of the result is boogie woogie, part is jazz, part even is Sir Arthur, since Mr. Walker knows when to stop."

The New York Times' Howard Barnes says: "The new musical comedy at the Broadway Theatre has far more definition than 'Blue Holiday.' It is still an untidy show.

NEEDS PLOT

6-2-45

Burton Rascoe in the World-Telegram says: "In the apt words of Edith Wilson, the Aunt Mel of 'Memphis Bound,' they beat the brains out of Gilbert and Sullivan with boogie woogie at the Broadway. And the musical comedy tradition itself suffered various abrasions and contusions. There was an all-Negro cast sadly in search of a book; there were such fine vocalists as Ada Brown and the Delta Rhythm Boys with almost nothing to sing; comedy was entirely absent, and for a Negro troupe, the whole ensemble was curiously lacking in zip and zingo . . . One thing you can say about 'Memphis Bound,' however, is that it is very clean—goodnatured, informal and inoffensive."

The Journal-American's Robert Garland says: Mr. Robinson is at his Bojangles best in a musical comedy, the father of which could easily have been 'Show Boat' and the mother of which was most certainly 'Pinafore' . . . Along with an all-Negro cast that couldn't be improved upon it adds up to a memorable afternoon or evening in the Land of Professional Make Believe. See it and hear it you must. But don't ask me to get you in.

'Memphis Bound' Pleases Boston

AFRO-AMERICAN 5-19-45

By LYDIA T. BROWN

BOSTON—The new musical comedy, "Memphis Bound," with Bill (Bojangles) Robinson in the leading role, made its debut here at the Colonial Theatre for a ten-day trial before unveiling on Broadway next week.

Tickets for the ten-day showing and the three matinees were sold out well in advance of the opening date.

Featured along with Robinson are Avon Long, former Sportin' Life of "Porgy and Bess"; Harriett Jackson, Helen Dowdy and Frank Wilson, also from the Gershwin vehicle, and many others including the Delta Rhythm Boys.

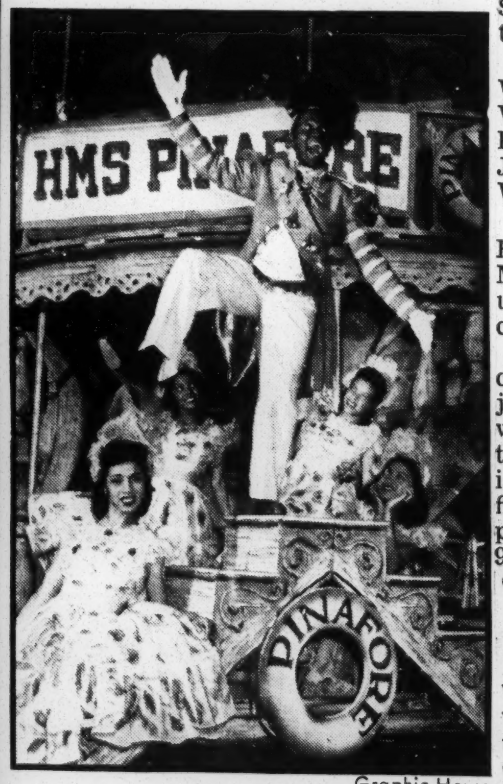
The critical firht-nighters gave the play a he arty reception.

New Musical in Manhattan

Time 6-4-45

Memphis Bound (lyrics & music by Don Walker & Clay Warnick; book by Albert Barker & Sally Benson; produced by John Wildberg) was first conceived as a swing *H.M.S. Pinafore*, later converted into an extravaganza about a Negro troupe who put on *Pinafore* to get their grounded showboat (the *Calliboga Queen*) off the Mississippi mudflats. But their version proves too much for their lady producer, and she bangs down the curtain on it.

She bangs down the curtain on much the best part of the show. Though this jive and boogie-woogie romp may have Gilbert & Sullivan spinning in their graves,



Graphic House

BILL ROBINSON
At 67, still superb.

6-4-45

they can't be spinning any faster than things do on the stage while *Pinafore* holds it. Thereafter the show gets grounded, along with the showboat. The plot trails off, without even leaving footprints, in all directions; the people go through a lot of boisterous but baffling antics; a dream fantasia nominally involving Gilbert & Sullivan's *Trial By Jury* gets wedged somewhere into the proceedings.

But by being as high-spirited as it is slaphappy, *Memphis Bound* adds up to an agreeable evening. For one thing, it has Bill Robinson, at 67 tapping superbly, still doing his famous staircase dance effortlessly, and more of a personality than ever. It also has Avon Long (*Porgy & Bess*) who darts and dances like a salamander with a sense of style. It has attractive girls, gay and colorful sets, brilliantly gaudy costumes, hot dance routines. There is plenty of fizz in *Memphis Bound*, but it ought to be better bottled.

"Blue Holiday" Closes after Ten Performances

AFRO-AMERICAN 6-2-45

NEW YORK.—"Blue Holiday," the all-colored variety show, starring Ethel Waters and Josh White, and which opened here at the Belasco, Monday of last week, failed to make the grade and was abruptly closed Saturday night after ten performances.

The 17 backers who pooled $45,000 to launch the venture, dropped $3,000 in the ill-fated vehicle which drew a gross of $13,000 when $16,000 was needed to cover the overhead.

Besides Miss Waters and Mr. White, others in the show were Willie Bryant, Timmie Rogers, Katherine Dunham's dancers, Hall Johnson's Choir and Mary Lou Williams.

6-2-45

The original opening of "Blue Holiday" had been set for Friday, May 19, but had to be postponed until the following Monday because of technical difficulties.

"Memphis Bound," another all-colored show with Bill (Bojangles) Robinson as the star, which opened last Thursday at the Broadway Theatre will move into the Belasco on June 11. The first five performances of "Memphis" brought in a reported $21,900 gross.

'Shuffle Along' to Europe

6-15-45

One day within the next few weeks, a group of 30 entertainers will embark for Europe, where, under the sponsorship of USO-Camp Shows, they will play *Shuffle Along* over the newly-established "Occupation Circuit."

American troops in Europe will thereby have the opportunity to see one of the most popular musicals of our time. *Shuffle Along*, produced in 1921, chalked up 504 performances when many of our soldiers were toddlers, some not yet born.

6-15-45

Noble Sissle, veteran director, songwriter and bandleader who will head the troupe, took exception to the description "Negro" musical when we talked to him the other day after a rehearsal at the Nola Studios, 1657 Broadway.

"Sure, its locale happens to be an all-Negro Southern town," he said, "but it's primarily a story about two men, one good and one bad, who want to be the mayor of the town. We show how a little political action can substitute good government for bad. It could happen to anybody."

Shuffle Along, of course, is not going abroad as a political lesson for Yanks overseas. It's mostly lively music and comedy, speeded up somewhat from the '20's version, with the "mammies" and the "shuffles" deleted.

The show's leading lady is Hope Foye, who so impressed her fellow-citizens of Meriden, Conn., that they raised funds to provide a scholarship for her to study with Friedrich Schorr, former Met singer.

P.M.

"The boys in Europe will love her," Gilbert Adams, leading man and winner of the show's mayoralty contest told us. "She's so pretty and such a wonderful singer. Hope hits high C without half trying.

"They'll like *Love Will Find a Way*, our theme song, too, I hope," he went on. "The song kind of expresses for us the desire to overcome racial barriers, the desire to achieve friendliness and understanding.

6-15-45

"So many good stories are coming out of this war about improved white and Negro relations. A lot of men overseas, Negro and white, are finding out a lot of things about each other. And that's all to the good. I guess it's been said often enough, 'A bullet knows no color line.'"

—MARK HARRIS

P.M. N.Y. 6-15-45

Noble Sissle, director of the USO-Camp Shows production of *Shuffle Along*, which leaves shortly to play Europe's "Occupation Circuit," goes over the score of the musical with Hope Foye and Gilbert Adams, the romantic leads. Besides directing, Sissle also will appear in the show. *Photo by Irving Haberman, PM*

Scribe Says California Has Stolen That Harlem Lamp Post

The Defender Chicago, Illinois

7-15-45

By FLOYD SNELSON

LOS ANGELES — "California here we come" rings true in face song and dance today as never before. One hardly realizes the loss Harlem has suffered to California until you start walking through the boulevards or visiting night clubs and theatres out here.

Show folk used to say: "Rather be a lamp post in Harlem than own a flock of buildings in any other place" but that seems to have changed now. For instance just yesterday I saw, and they are making this town their home, many former Harlem fixtures you will remember. Just read this list:

Shelton Brooks, master showman, and writer of "Some of These Days."

Mable Scott, who danced and sang all over Europe.

Lena Horne, the lithe and pretty MGM star whose phenomenal rise to fame has made her the sweetheart of the screen.

The Mills Brothers, the peer of entertainment known around the world.

Maceo Burch, former dance producer, now popular cafe owner.

Leroy Collins, nationally known booking and press agent.

Anise Boyer, cutest damsel and the best of best in terpsichore.

Mrs. Noble Sissle, wife of the noted bandleader and mother of lovely children.

Ivie Anderson, former vocalist with the king of 'em all, Duke Ellington.

Billie Yarborough, best dancer of the "Shuffle Along" crop.

Lenore Winkler, the niftiest eyeful of "The Green Pastures."

Helen Mitchell Smith, loveliest picture girl of Shuffle Along.

Ruby Barbee-Wilson, the dandiest of "Chocolate Dandies."

Nina Mae McKinney, the first of her sex and race to pass screen tests.

Peters' Sisters, a ton of dynamite took Broadway by storm.

Nicholas Brothers, startled Broadway with their inimitable dance routine.

Dandridge Sisters, sparkling dancers, and a delightful looksee of charm.

Jimmy Baskette, a study in powerful manhood, an eclipse of the screen, shares honors with his equally skillful wife, Maggie, a de luxe dancer.

Edna Thrower, leading light of the dramatic success "The Green Pastures."

Leonard Christmas, one time Harlem playboy, now hotel proprietor.

Edna Deaver McCormick, beauteous, eastern socialite, popular business woman.

Baby Simmons, whose beauty and personality took California sunshine eastward.

Lola Griffen, although longs for her N.Y.C. home, craved California sunshine.

Helen Humes, mellow voice thrush has sung her way into the hearts of all.

Bess Gant, nationally famous authority on good things to eat and drink.

Calvin Bailey, the stage beauties of Broadway miss their caricatures.

Bill Smallwood, who pens the doings of dames in society of the swank.

Jimmy Nelson, dapper proprietor of the landmark, Dunbar hotel.

Curtis Mosby, proprietor Club Alabam, whose name is synonymous with night life.

Ben Walker, former manager Shepp's playhouse, now western booking agent.

Gordon L. Sheppard, gave to downtown L. A. a pleasure spot that already is gaining national fame.

Curtis Thompson and his wife, better known in Texas, are always in the groove.

Lois Boone, eastern seaboard favorite who escaped Pearl Harbor disaster by inches, is always in the mood.

The New York colony clubs of Los Angeles meets every Thursday at Shepp's Playhouse club, nuf sed.

Dooley Wilson-Sensation In Bloomer Girl

DOOLEY "CASABLANCA" WILSON, his delightful piano playing and torchy singing has been holding down one of the high spots of "Bloomer Girl" which has been playing at the Shubert Theatre since last fall. Wilson was called in from Hollywood where he was engaged with plenty of movie work since his successful appearance in Bogart's "Casablanca" and assigned to the musical here. Now before and after each showing the popular actor-singer-pianist can be seen in and around Shubert Alley signing scores of autographs.

Broadway Report: P.M's New York, N.Y. 9-16-45

Two Who Sing a 'Carib Song'

From Boston, where it is currently getting ready for Broadway, promising reports are drifting this way about *Carib Song*, the new musical starring Katherine Dunham which opens here at the Adelphii on Sept. 27.

Carib Song marks the bow of a new writing team, William Archibald and Baldwin Bergersen. Bergersen, who has done the music, is 30, worked as pianist for the ILGWU's *Pins and Needles*. The 27-year-old Arcvhibald won note as a dancer, was recently in *Laffing Room Only* and *Concert Varieties*. It is from his impressions and memories of Trinidad, West Indian island where he was born and where he lived until he was 20, that Archibald has written the book and lyrics for *Carib Song*.

"Trinidad is British, you know," Archibald said at a rehearsal just before the show left for its out-of-town try-out. "The British colonials are in the minority but they hold all the power.

"The natives are East Indians, brought from India to work as coolies on the plantations, Negroes, Chinese, South Americans. Nothing is done to help the colored peoples. They have little to live on, for them hospital facilities are tragically inadequate. Although they are supposed to go to school from the age of six, the practice is not encouraged too strenuously. And they work for such small wages they might just as well do nothing and not get paid."

Archibald, who still retains some of the Trinidad accent that Americans have become acquainted with through Calypso songs and, perhaps, through *Rum and Coca Cola*, told us that for over 200 years his family has been on Trinidad's cocoa and sugar cane plantations. 9-16-45

How did his family feel about his adverse opinion of the ruling group in Trinidad?

Archibald smiled. "You think that all the British in Trinidad are solidly in the Rudyard Kipling group? It's not so—many in the British colony have deep feelings against the way the natives are treated. My oldest sister is in social work and has written many, many articles against the whole set-up.

"My other sister was a nurse in London during the blitz. She came to Trinidad to work as an assistant in the public health project under a three-year contract. She saw the bribery and misuse of funds and she brought it out into the open. Naturally they tried to fire her. She won her job back but refused to take it.

"Now her charges against the administration are being fought in the courts. And the three lawyers who are fighting it for her are cousins of mine."

Carib Song, Archibald said, was an attempt to describe the "quality and atmosphere" of folk life in Trinidad. The community serves as a background for a simple triangle romance which ends in individual tragedy. 9-16-45

"The play wasn't written as a protest against anything," he went on. "We felt that for a beginning it would be good to describe the way of life on the island. We hope we have evoked an authentic atmosphere.

"You might say that *Carib Song* is progressive in that it advances the music and dancing and culture of the natives, to which the British are wholly unsympathetic."

"We have written a Calypso song, *'A Woman Is a Rascal'*," composer Bergersen put in. "The conservatives of Trinidad feel Calypso songs should be squelched; they say they are immoral and obscene. But actually calypso is a wonderful, alive musical form—like the American blues and other folk songs."

"Calypso is the name of the Greek muse of song," Archibald explained. "In Trinidad it is the art of improvisation. The singers invent as they go along, they challenge and contest with each other in rhyme. When they get together they may sing calypsos out of the past but they will work out new ones too. *Roosevelt in Trinidad* and *The Duke of Windsor* are two famous calypso songs that grew out of the events of the times. The material for calypso songs comes out of what is happening in our lives and in the world. 9-16-45

"There are half-a-dozen leading calypso singers on the island. They get thrown in jail ever so often, too, because they make up calypsos about scandals involving leading figures of the island."

Archibald hopes to return to Trinidad for occasional visits, although he considers New York his permanent home. "I feel very deep ties towards Trinidad. That is, I suppose, how anyone feels about the place he grew up in. I haven't yet become an American citizen, you know, though I know it would be the right thing to do. God knows, I don't feel like a British subject at all; I've always felt so strongly against their rule. I guess it's that I still unconsciously feel strongly attached to Trinidad itself. I just couldn't think of going back there as a visitor, an American citizen. On the other hand I couldn't think of living there the rest of my life because it's so narrowminded. It's actually such a small, small place."

William Archibald (left) and Baldwin Bergersen. Archibald, a native of Trinidad, has written the book and lyrics of *Carib Song*, Bergersen the music.

Photo by Arthur Leipzig, PM

—Seymour Peck

PM N.Y. N.Y. 9-16-45

Katherine Dunham and William Franklin play a corn planter and his wife in *Carib Song*, new musical about Trinidad which opens Sept. 27, at the Adelphi.

Photo by Alfredo Valente

Stars Again. Katherine Dunham, famous West Indian dancer and, who takes the lead role in "Carib Song," a musical about Trinidad, which opens at the Adelphi September 27. She plays opposite William Franklin, the corn planter, as his wife. The play was written by William Archibald, a white native of Trinidad, and Baldwin Bergersen.

Negro Conducts Broadway Show Orchestra for the First Time

Everett Lee, concert violinist, this week took over the post as conductor and musical director of the Broadway musical hit *On The Town* at the Martin Beck Theatre. The assignment gives Lee the distinction of being the first Negro to wave the baton over a white orchestra in a Broadway production.

When *On The Town* opened almost a year ago, Lee was given the spot as first violinist with the orchestra by Leonard Bernstein, composer of the music. Prior to that, he was assistant conductor of *Carmen Jones*. He was a member of the New York City Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, and appeared as guest soloist with the orchestra last March.

Lee is just 25. He is a native of Cleveland, and was concertmaster of the Cleveland Institute of Music orchestra. He was first violinist with the great concertmaster Adolph Busch, and was soloist with the Cleveland Philharmonic under Artur Rodzinski.

Leonard Bernstein, former director of the show's orchestra, is taking the place of Stokowski as director of the New York City Center Symphony Orchestra.

9-22-45

Makes Theatre History. Everett Lee, young violinist, who took over the direction of the stage orchestra for "On the Town," chats with Nancy Walker, star of the show.

AFTER DARK

Sepia Singing Trio Stars in Varied Bowery Show

Detroit Free Press Detroit, Michigan

9-25-45

Day, Dawn and Dusk are versatile sepia songsters topping the Bowery show. They offer harmony in seven different languages, with a touch of humor as they parody operas. They are internationally famous, having played a command performance for the Royal Family in England, and having been tendered an invitation to return by the King of Sweden. Tenor Peter Higgins continues in favor, with his Irish ballads and hit tunes. Newcomers are Lester Cole and his Debs, Lynn Shirley, acrobatic dancer; Eve Warren, with accordion melodies, Martinette and a talking crow.

Day, Dawn, Dusk

been dueting several of the latest Spanish-American tunes at the Wonder Bar. Al does all right on the Spanish lyrics, with Judy following through on the English. . . . Eve Brian, lulltime keyboard artist, opened Monday at the Penobscot Club. . . . Dimas and Anita spark the Palm Beach revue, with Juanita Closely, novelty dancer, and Sherman Hayes' orchestra.

* * *

ONE OF the most popular characterizations of Bernie Green at Club Stevadora is that of a Russian violinist, in full regalia, in which he demonstrates striking ability on the strings. . . . Billy Meagher's frequent employment of audience participation increases the effectiveness of his clowning and chatter at Club Gay Haven.

JACK TARVER

Uncle Tom Gets New Lease on Life

The Atlanta Constitution

Atlanta, Georgia 10-1-45

After 90 years, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is in for a comeback.

And not because of the housing shortage, either. I'm talking about the stage-play.

Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves—and simultaneously put Uncle Tom on the skids.

Since long before the turn of the century, touring troups of tented Thespians have been having difficulty keeping body and props together. Not only was Uncle Tom but a step ahead of Simon Legree but Legree himself was oftimes but a step ahead of the sheriff.

More modern vehicles like "Charlie's Aunt" and "Abie's Irish Rose" have been attracting all the customers and many's the road-show manager who, having despaired of Uncle Tom ever making a comeback, has paid the cast off in bloodhounds and departed.

Last week, however, Uncle Tom got his first break since Emancipation Day. Following protests by various Negro groups, the CIO and the Communist party, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was banned in Bridgeport, Conn.

Authorities changed their minds and allowed it to be shown, however, once someone convinced them the Civil War had already been fought. But the damage—or rather the benefit to Uncle Tom—was already done.

Now that it's able to advertise "Banned in Bridgeport," Uncle Tom should start packing them in again. Who knows—Little Eliza may spend another 90 years picking her way across the ice.

88b-1945

West Coast Hears The Ethel Waters That Broadway Loves

Chicago Defender
4-21-45

BY LAWRENCE F. LaMAR

LOS ANGELES, (NPB) — The Ethel Waters musical revue starrer "Rhapsody in Rhythm," which opened at the Mayan theatre Friday night, was attractively embellished by the addition of some starling talent in the person of songstress Flora Washington and the Four Step Brothers.

Miss Waters, singing several of those numbers which brought her fame and fortune, was superb in the starring role. A great artist, clever show woman, she is truly the "first lady" of the show world. Ben Carter and Mantan Moreland occupying the feature comic roles, were generously applauded to the echo for their performance.

Timmie Rogers, always a dynamic figure in motion, was in a spot all by himself. His was but to do, "not to reason why," and he turned in just that kind of an act. He kept the place strictly show business and the audience treated him in kind. The Step Brothers are a 'mad act' and fit in anywhere they are placed. Dusty Fletcher was marvelous in the skit he appeared. 4-21-45

The Savage Dancers, a group of talented rhythm specialists through their suave dance gyrations beautifully bore out the title of the show. They are marvelous. "Rhapsody in Rhythm" is right. Lauretta Butler's famed Jubilee Kids, a group of juveniles nearly 'stole' the show. They are clever to the nth degree. A large and appreciative first night audience was on hand to greet La Waters in the Paul Small show.

Esquire Mag Announces Its Jazz Poll Kings

Pittsburgh Courier
1-27-45

Esquire magazine, on the 100th anniversary of Jazz, today announced the winners in its second annual poll to select the outstanding kings of swing for 1945.

They will be featured on an hour and a half Blue network program January 17, with many of the winners, including the previously announced outstanding band—Duke Ellington's orchestra — performing in the second annual All-American Jazz concert at Los Angeles Philharmonic auditorium for the benefit of Volunteer Army Canteen service.

1-27-45

Gold award winners are: Cootie Williams, trumpet; Jay C. Higginbotham, trombone; Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Benny Goodman, clarinet; Teddy Wilson, piano; Al Casey, guitar; Oscar Pettiford, string bass; Sidney Catlett, drums; Red Norvo, vibraharp; Louis Armstrong, vocal; Mildred Bailey, vocal; Duke Ellington, arranger and band; Buck Clayton, trumpet (favorite in the Armed forces).

Silver award: Roy Eldridge, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, saxophone; Benny Carter, alto saxophone; Lester Young, tenor saxophone; Edmond Hall, clarinet; Art Tatum, piano; Oscar Moore, guitar; Slam Stewart, string bass; Dave Tough, drums; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone; Joe Turner, vocal; Billie Holliday, vocal; Billy Strayhorn, arranger; Count Basie, band; Willie Smith, alto saxophone (Armed Forces favorite).

New stars: Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet; Bill Harris, trombone; Herbie Fields, alto saxophone; Flip Phillips, tenor saxophone; Aaron Sachs, clarinet; Eddie Heywood, piano; Remo Palmieri, guitar; Chubby Jackson, string bass; Specs Powell, drums; Ray Nance, violin; Eddie Vinson, vocal; Anita O'Day, vocal; Johnny Thompson, arranger; Lionel Hampton, band; Mel Powell, piano (Armed Forces favorite.)

Broadway Cinderella

SHEILA GUYSE,
who was discovered in a Kansas City night club, has been signed for one of the top roles in Producer John Wildberg's all-colored musical, "Memphis Bound," in which Bill Robinson has the male lead. June Hawkins, Thelma Carpenter and Marva Louis are other possibilities. She is said to be more beautiful then Lena Horne and her equal in the vocal department.

Musical

THEATRE IS FOUND FOR 'WISHING TREE'

New York Times
5-2-45

All-Negro Variety Show to Open at Belasco May 18 or 19 With Ethel Waters

By SAM ZOLOTOW

From all accounts, a home has been found for "The Wishing Tree," the all-Negro vaudeville show with Ethel Waters (she arrives here next week from the Coast) and Josh White as the headliners. Opening May 18 or 19, the program will be put on display at the Belasco, where nightly performances, in addition to three matinees a week, will be given. Contracts have been drawn and are awaiting the signature of Irvin Shapiro, sponsor of the variety bill. He is also conferring with the American Guild of Variety Artists in regard to a two-week bond covering the salaries of the entertainers. 5-3-45

Besides Miss Waters and Mr. White, the personnel thus far includes Muriel Gaines, Hall Johnson's choir and dancers trained by Katherine Dunham. Songs will be culled from the works of Duke Ellington, E. Y. Harburg, Earl Robinson and Al Moritz. Moe Hack will direct under the supervision of Perry Watkins.

Incidentally, the week of May 14 will greet another all-Negro show, "Memphis Bound," due at the Broadway on May 17. With a cast headed by Bill Robinson and Avon Long, the musical comedy will have its world première tonight in Boston.

'BLUE HOLIDAY' RUN ENDED AT BELASCO

New York Times

All-Negro Variety Show Quits Theatre After One Week— Wildberg to Shift Hit

5-28-45

By SAM ZOLOTOW

Despite a valiant attempt to keep "Blue Holiday" on the boards, the all-Negro variety show failed to make the grade. Beset with more than the usual share of difficulties, the vaudeville offering, starring Ethel Waters, had its belated première at the Belasco last Monday and was abruptly taken off on Saturday night. Counting two paid previews, the program received ten performances in all. The total intake was in the neighborhood of $13,000. To cover the overhead the attraction had to gross $16,000 weekly. 5-28-45

Seventeen backers originally had pooled $45,000 for the venture, which marked the joint managerial bow of Irvin Shapiro and Doris Cole. As a friendly gesture Jed Harris did what he could before the opening to re-routine the bill, with the assistance of Monroe B. Hack and Perry Watkins, the directors. Besides Miss Waters, the roster included Josh White, Willie Bryant, Timmie Rogers, Katherine Dunham's Dancers, Hall Johnson's Choir and Mary Lou Williams.

The Belasco won't have to wait long for another tenant. On June 11 John Wildberg's newly arrived production of "Memphis Bound" will be shifted to that house from the Broadway. And on the same date "Up in Central Park" will be switched from the Century to the Broadway. Mr. Wildberg could have transferred his Negro musical, starring Bill Robinson, to any one of several houses, but decided on the Belasco when it suddenly became available. There's a reason for that; Mr. Wildberg is one of the Belasco's owners.

The first five performances of "Memphis Bound," which included the receipts from a preview and the increased scale for the première, are reported to have brought in $21,900.

"Memphis Bound" Ready After Tryout in Boston

Herald-American 5-19-45

Katherine Dunham Has New Vehicle

By EDWARD BENNETT

HOLLYWOOD.—The Broadway show whirl is twittering with anticipation of the forthcoming line of all-colored shows due to fall here this and in the next few months with a glittering array of name stars.

Already set to open Friday at the Belasco Theatre is "Blue Holiday," the Ethel Waters which was tentatively title Wishing Tree." Though Waters is attraction enou any show for most theatre "Blue Holiday" will have ber of other prominent players.

Co-starred with her will be Josh White, guitar-playing, folk-ballad ist, who for the last year has been one of the most magnetic personalities to be seen in night clubs, movies, concert halls, or heard via many famous records and radio broadcasts.

Willie Bryant, Emcee

Also included in the cast are Josephine Premice, the Three Poms, the Chocolateers, Hall Johnson's Choir, Willie Bryant, master of ceremonies, who will appear with Miss Waters in a scene from her dramatic hit, "Mamba's Daughters."

In another number, Miss Waters accompanied by Josh White, will sing the E. Y. Harburg-Earl Robinson ballad, "Free and Equal Blues," to be heard for the first time from any stage. Katherine Dunham will stage the dances, while Duke Ellington has three new songs in the show.

"Blue Holiday" will play seven nights a week, with matinees on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

"Memphis Bound," May 23

On May 23, "Memphis Bound," starring 67-year-old Bill (Bojangles) Robinson will have a preview at the Broadway Theatre, prior to its appearance for critical appraisal the next day. The play is now in Boston, where the tryout has been extended through May 19.

Among the names gracing the cast are Oscar Plante, Billy Daniels, Charles Welch, Frank Wilson, Avon Long, William Smith, Williard Dillard and the Delta Rhythm Boys.

Other featured are Helen Dowdy and Harriet Jackson, formerly of the Three "Porgy and Bess"; Ada Brown, Sheila Guyse, Ida James, Thelma Carpenter, Ann Robinson, and Georgia Ann Timmons.

Rehearsals are slated to get under way in July for an authentic West Indian folk musical to be called either "Carbi Song" or "Caribbean Song," starring Katherine Dunham. Paul Robeson has been approached to play the leading male role.

As Tom-Toms Beat, Phillips Students Will Give Dances of Foreign Lands

Chicago Tribune 4-15-45 1KE

Audiences at the Phillips High school spring music festival will be taken on an imaginary trip to Mexico, Casablanca, Africa, Italy, and Paris. Taking part in the African ceremonial number (left to right) will be Doris Bush, 3555 South Park way; Verna Knight, 644 E. 38th st.; Ruth Tyler, 6011 S. May st.; Olivia Ware, 509 E. 38th st.; Shirley Stewart, 4010 South Park way, and Marjorie Wyrick, 567 E. 34th pl. [TRIBUNE Photo by Julius Gantter]

(Story on Page 4.)

88a-1945

Drama

N.Y. N.Y.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

the Nation

PROBABLY no one will ever know why there were two "Hot Mikados" a few years ago or why there should appear now, within a week of each other, two modernized versions of "Pinafores." One of these "Pinafores" keeps some of the old words but rescores the music as "swing"; the other sets an entirely new book to the music as written; and the two are so different that it would be confusing not to treat them separately. Probably the only general conclusion to be drawn is that Sullivan's score continues to come through with surprising vitality. 6-23-45

The swing version—called "Memphis Bound" and housed in the Broadway Theater—exhibits the virtue and the defect most conspicuous in nearly every all-Negro musical show I have ever seen: the virtue being the gusto with which individual bits are performed, the defect a lack of organization plus a very uncertain pace. Bill Robinson plays Sir Joseph Porter, and his conspicuous presence would be alone sufficient to make almost any performance worth seeing. At an announced sixty-seven he is still an incomparable dancer; but since that fact is generally recognized, it may be more important to point out that Mr. Robinson is also one of the most *authoritative* comic actors now visible in the United States.

Old-timers like to tell us that all the favorites of their day, ingenue and tragedian alike, had in themselves a power to command attention even when the words they were given to speak were feeble or foolish. Mr. Robinson makes it possible for us to believe that something of the sort may have been true, for he dominates the stage, and he needs only to lift a finger to focus every eye upon him. Something in his very presence seems to say, "Watch me. It will be worth your while." And it always is. No serious actor now playing on our stage really has that power, and though there are two or three comedians—Ed Wynn, for example—who approach it, only Bobby Clark can really challenge comparison with Mr. Robinson. Avon Long, who gets second billing, rises also to considerable heights, and several of the feminine members of the cast distinguish themselves; but the plot, which wastes more than half the evening in an unnecessary attempt to explain why "Pinafore" is being performed at all, is unusually trying even as musical-comedy plots go. Some of the swing arrangements, notably that of the love-versus-reason song, are ingenious and amusing; others seemed to me, who am no *aficionado,* merely far too noisy.

Any description of George Kaufman's scheme for his "Hollywood Pinafore" (Alvin Theater) is bound to make it seem unmanageable. The idea that the good ship of Gilbert's imagination might become a Hollywood studio ruled over by an incompetent Joseph Porter, frequented by a ten-percenter named Dick Live-Eye, and haunted by a gossip columnist called Little Miss Butter-up, sounds like one of those ideas which occur to farce writers late at night and are given up next morning. Thanks, however, to Mr. Kaufman's unrivaled theatrical dexterity, the whole affair works out very smoothly, and the love of a director's star daughter for a humble writer becomes as unthinkable as that of Gilbert's original heroine for a common sailor. Music from several of the Sullivan operas is nicely adapted to new words, and whatever else "Hollywood Pinafore" may or may not be, it is pleasant to listen to, pleasant to look at, and so deftly paced that its very expertness is a delight and makes one wish that Mr. Kaufman, who is director as well as lord high everything else of the production, would undertake to stage an "Iolanthe" or a "Patience" as originally written.

Several reviewers have complained that the jibes at Hollywood are too reminiscent of those the author has delivered himself of on previous occasions, and even that the movies have so matured that they should now be treated with respect. Possibly there is something to be said for these objections, or at least for the first of them. But the really original musical-comedy books of the last few years can be counted on the thumbs, and "Hollywood Pinafore," besides having the advantage of a distinguished score, is better danced, better sung, better costumed, and better directed than most current musical shows. The charm of William Gaxton usually escapes me, but he is funnier than usual as Dick Live-Eye, and Victor Moore is his usual engaging self. Shirley Booth sings her "I Am Called Butter-up" song so expertly as to stop the show, and Viola Essen, once of Mordkin's Ballet, gives a brilliant performance in one of those dance interludes which have come to be a regular feature of the musical show. This one tells an amusing story about a small-town girl who gets a contract. 6-23-45

Musicals

Broadway Musical Gives Afro-American True Picture of N.Y. Life

7-1-45

By THEOPHILUS LEWIS

NEW YORK—"On the Town," one of the popular musical hits now playing on Broadway, is a unique production because it actually does one of the things the theatre is supposed to do—it faithfully reflects the side of life that forms the background of its story. Baltimore, Md.

The story consists of the adventures of three sailors, on 24-hour shore leave, looking for fun and romance in New York. A one-day visit in a big city is, among other things, a sightseeing tour.

It is the treatment of that side of the story that makes "On The Town" different from most shows of its type.

One Race Usually Shown

The average musical show would present the citizens of the town as members of a single race. Colored, especially, would be absent from the human panorama.

A foreigner seeing the show abroad would get the impression that colored people are as rare in American cities as Eskimos in Naples.

The producers of "On The Town" tailored the show to square with the facts of life, showing colored, as well as other racial elements, woven in the pattern of a cosmopolitan city.

Shown as Part of Life

"On The Town" is not just a big show that includes some colored specialty acts not connected with the story. The colored characters are not dragged in for comic effect or clowning.

They are not highlighted or emphasized in any way. They are just there, a part of the human scene as they are in life.

As the sailors leave their ship they meet colored mechanics reporting for work on the day shift in the navy yard.

While racing about the town, they bump into colored passengers in the subway, are served by colored waiters in a cafe, have fun with a party of colored youngsters in an amusement park and are warned to keep within the law by a colored policeman.

When they report back to their ship the next morning, they meet colored working men leaving the navy yard after a night's work on the swing shift.

Difficult to Distinguish

No one would maintain that "On The Town" is a good production merely because it is true to life in writing and sensible in casting.

Nicholas Bros. Star in New Show

Afro-American

7-14-45

The Nicholas Brothers dancing team are starred in "Hep-Sations of 1945," a show which began touring the country this week on one nighters which began in Raleigh, N.C., and will continue from New York to Hollywood.

The Nicholas Brothers recently were re-united after a year during which Fayard, the older brother, served in the Army. Dizzy Gillespie's band, chosen All-American by Esquire, will play for the show and for dancing.

June Eckstine is the singing attraction, and lovely Lane, the dancing star. Patterson and Jackson will provide the comedy.

HARTFORD, CONN.
TIMES
Cir. D. 82,213

SEP 26 1945

Banning 'Uncle Tom'

Opposition to the "musical version" of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" which had been scheduled for presentation in Bridgeport may have been based on something more than the original play written on Harriet Beecher Stowe's immortal story. There have been "musical versions" of "Carmen" and other classics which, though successful as box office attractions, have been regarded by some as less than valuable contributions to culture. Perhaps the Park City protest, voiced by the CIO, the Bridgeport Pastors' Association, Negro leaders and the Communist Party, was as much against possible mutilation of the Stowe work as it was against something which might hold up to ridicule people of any race, or revive memories that could breed animosity in these days.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin," in its original form, could not be regarded as anything to hold up the Negro race to ridicule. It was instead a play which held the white man up to scorn for brutal treatment of Negroes. That is why it never was played in the South. It was one of the most popular plays ever produced in America, and it impressed millions of youths in the North with the evils of slavery. There never was a more lovable figure than Uncle Tom nor a more despicable one than Simon Legree. Who will ever forget the translation of Little Eva to heaven, or the flight of Eliza across the ice, with the bloodhounds (which usually were Great Danes) in pursuit? There was nothing funny about that play, to those who saw it when it was at its best.

It is possible, of course, that a "musical version" could burlesque Mrs. Stowe's book. That would be regrettable table. But, if the only ground the deep Bridgeport people had for their objection was the story of Uncle Tom, it will seem to many that they have been hypersensitive.

Harlem's Prospects For Broadway Set With Question Mark

Chicago Def. Chicago, Illinois 7-14-45

Arthur Bronson, Variety correspondent, with the aid of several Negro critics including Dick Campbell, USO Camp Shows coordinator, is greatly disturbed over "the rash of Negro shows reported for production next season."

In fact Mr. Bronson points out that Harlem itself is worried over future shows, particularly their class and type, and here is where Campbell and others are brought into the picture. But let the mag's correspondent tell the story:

"A rash of Negro shows reported for production on Broadway next season has caused a lot of concern in New York's Negro community. Expecting a continuation of the stereotyped characterizations that the Negro finds offensive and libelous, various cultural leaders have voiced their disapproval on the grounds of inaccuracy, bad taste and creation of bad will.

"Negroes in the entertainment field, such as managers and bookers, have entered the controversy, on more practical grounds. Voicing the same ethical objections as listed above, they also point to something important and new. From the box-office point of view, they say, the routine Negro show is no longer good business.

There are about 10 Negro musicals in the talking stage for next season, although quite likely these will boil down to three or four by production time. List includes a musical version of Octavus Roy Cohen's "Florian Slappey" stories, with Dan Shapiro producing; "No Foolin', Susie," with Henry Adrian producing; "St. Louis Woman," with Lena Horne; "Carib Song," West Indian folk musical, with Katherine Dunham and dancers; "Song of Joseph," music by Morton Gould, which the New Opera company is considering, and a revival of "Green Pastures," among others.

There are straight plays also planned or in works, with Negroes waiting to know more about them before passing judgment, because from the few facts heard the plays sound promising. These include Joanna Roos' "Reveille," play about segregation of Negro school children in a New York town, which Oscar Hammerstein 2nd and Richard Rodgers are producing; "Walls of Jericho," play about the return of a Negro GI to his southern home, by Arnaud d'Usseau and James Gow, authors of "Tomorrow the World;" a projected dramatization of Richard Wright's autobiographical "Black Boy," with Canada Lee, who owns the rights; Jose Ferrer's production of Lillian Smith's "Strange Fruit," and Abram Hill's adaptation of Len Zinburg's novel, "Walk Hard," which the American Negro Theatre tried out last winter.

One of these, "Strange Fruit," is surprisingly suspect among Negroes, latter having resented the novel on the grounds that it had no point and merely disgraced the Negro by showing its most educated element (in Ronnie) throwing herself away on a sordid love affair.

It's, however, the musicals on which the Negro community is training its critical guns. The "Florian Slappey" production particularly infuriates them, as an insult to the Negro race, Negroes pointing out that years ago when the stories first appeared in the Saturday Evepost, they were writing letters of protest to the editor. The "laughing, dancing, dice-shooting" type of Negro which the average sepia musical partrays "is a fraud as well as a libel," and the Negro wants him discarded.

And, as pointed out by Dick Campbell, well-known Negro talent agent, who is in touch with Negro opinion on theatrical matters, musicals and dramas with this type of Negro don't pay off. They never have, except for extenuating circumstances.

In the last decade, from George Abbott's "Brown Sugar," which lasted three days in 1937, to the recent short-lived "Memphis Bound," Campbell points out, such stereotyped-Negro shows have been flops. The Negro psalm-singing, "Smile and show your teeth" type of show has fizzled, whether it was "Run, Little Chillun," "Swingin' the Dream," "Sweet River" for the recent vaudeville "Blue Holiday." "Porgy and Bess," with its crap-shooting, dope- addicted Negro, was only successful, according to Campbell's view, because of the magnificent Gershwin music. "Green Pastures" scored because of its religious quality; "Mamba's Daughters" because of Ethel Waters. And in the last-named, it was partially acceptable to Negroes because a few of the characters delineated were fine people.

Likes and Dislikes

Every play before the current hit, "Anna Lucasta," put Negroes in an inferior, debasing role, with the exception of "Native Son," and Negroes have resented the fact, says Campbell. Characters in "Lucasta" are cheap and grasping, but at least they are human, and treated as such, with the failings of whites, reds or other humans. Negroes want their race depicted in proper, improved setting on the stage; they want stereotyped caricatures abandoned.

Campbell also points out how Hollywood and the radio have sinned similarly against the Negro. Radio has its Rochester, Amos and Andy, Ed Green and Gee Gee James, all mimicking the stereotyped Negro. It also has the porter-cook-maid type in its soap operas.

As to films, says Campbell, Hollywood has only given out one or two fine Negro characterizations in the last 10 years, such as Rex Ingram in Humphrey Bogart's "Sahara" and Ernest Anderson in Bette Davis' "In This Our Life." "Stormy Weather" fell short as a variety show on the screen. "Cabin in the Sky" was a definite setback to the Negro, Campbell also pointing out that the stage version flopped badly on tour. One of the worst pic offenders, said Campbell, was "Tales of Manhattan," because of the Rochester-Ethel Waters-Paul Robeson final sequence. "Imitation of Life," recently revived, is another bad one, Negroes particularly objecting to the part where Louise Beavers shows her daughter (Fredi Washington) how complacently she accepts her position of life in the kitchen as slavery, to show her daughter how useless it is to fight against such a role.

Rochester Pays Kitty $800

Chicago, Ill. Chicago Def.

NEW YORK—"Rochester's" girl Friday and partner who just closed the Paradise theatre in Detroit, is appearing with Rochester at $800 per week. This comedy act is an assured show stopper and always an hilarious punch.

Miss Murray was featured in the recent Olson and Johnson's shows, "Hellz-a-Poppin'" and "Sons-o'-Fun." 7-7-45

She has appeared in many television broadcasts in New York, Syracuse and Schenectady.

Clubs and theatres all over the country have played her and theatrical periodicals rate her as one of the outstanding comediennes of the day.

Negro Conductor Of Broadway Musical

The New York Age New York, N.Y. 9-22-45

Everett Lee, outstanding Negro concert violinist, this week took over the post as conductor and musical director of the Broadway musical hit "ON THE TOWN" at the Martin Beck Theatre. The assignment gives Mr. Lee the distinction of being the first Negro to wave the baton over a white orchestra in a Broadway production.

When "ON THE TOWN" opened more than a month ago, Lee was given the spot as first violinist with the orchestra by Leonard Bernstein, composer of the music. Prior to that, he was assistant conductor of "CARMEN JONES". He was a member of the New York City Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, and appeared as guest soloist with the orchestra last March.

Everett Lee is just twenty-five. He is a native of Cleveland, Ohio, and was concertmaster of his high school orchestra, then later concertmaster of the Cleveland Institute of Music orchestra. He was first violinist with the great concertmaster Adolph Busch, and was soloist with the Cleveland Philharmonic under Artur Rodzinski. 9-22-45

The above photo show him conversing with Nancy Walker, stage and screen artist and star of "ON THE TOWN."

Lift Ban On "Uncle Tom" Play

The Journal and Guide Norfolk Va. 10-6-45

BRIDGEPORT, Conn.—(ANP)—The ban against the stage production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was lifted here last week.

In announcing that the play will come here for three performances at the Civic Auditorium, City Controller Perry Rodman said that the ban was being lifted in response to a wave of protest larger than those received against permitting the play to be staged here.

Rodman's cancellation of the first booking of the musical version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel followed protests from the Bridgeport Industrial Union Council, CIO; Bridgeport Pastor's Association, the Communist party and Negro community leaders. These groups charged that the play recalled conditions best forgotten.

The show's booking for New Haven on Sept. 29 has been cancelled.

Bill Robinson, a youngster of 67, goes over a scene from *Memphis Bound* with Marlene Strong, 8, and Timothy Grace, 7, at the Broadway Theater before the show's departure for a Boston tryout.

"All in a day's work," Bill said sadly when asked to pose with Sheila Guys (left) and Ida James. The girls did their best to cheer him up.

VIEWS and Reviews

By GEORGE S. SCHUYLER

(This column represents the personal opinion of Mr. Schuyler and in no way reflects the editorial opinion of The Pittsburgh Courier.—The Editors)

Katherine Dunham's contribution to the arts is sufficiently outstanding, it seems to me, to warrant her receiving the Spingarn Medal. Her "Tropical Revue," which for two seasons has been a Broadway sensation, is quite unique and surpasses anything of its kind to be produced in this country or, for that matter, anywhere else. Here is a trained anthropologist who has gone to the sources for her material rather than relying on second-hand information. Here is a trained dancer without any inferiority complex who has not been satisfied to simply imitate European dance forms but has glorified the art of the colored peoples of the world and shown that it has its roots in Africa, from whence the dark peoples of Latin America and the United States originated.

Her contribution is significant not only because she has measured up to the highest standards of an exacting art form but, more important, because she has gone far beyond other Negro artists who are mainly satisfied to show their ability in mastering European art rather than glorifying Negro art. In the past we have honored our artists simply because they acquitted themselves as well or better than white artists in what was regarded as the latters' field. They have sung songs, acted in plays and written stories and verse, created statues and paintings, but they seldom displayed anything which was a tribute to the artistry of the colored group as a whole.

* * *

The most effective publicity of any nation or group has been rendered through the arts, and for this reason artists of all sorts have been mobilized to advertise a country or a nation or a people. For instance, the Imperial Russian Ballet was organized and subsidized by Czarist Russia to "sell" its regime to Western Europe and America shortly after the abortive 1905 Revolution when the reputation of the Czarist government was at low ebb. It traveled all over the world, thrilling audiences everywhere and building national prestige. Likewise the Soviet regime, in an effort to offset its bad reputation, has used its art production, especially its composers and educational methods to build goodwill. Wagner's "Die Meistersinger" was subsidized for much the same reason, just as the Egyptian government subsidized Verdi to write "Aida" for purposes of national glorification. Likewise Chopin and Paderewski are cited as evidences of Polish culture and civilization and Strauss is pleasantly identified with Vienna, Confucius and Lin Yutang with China, Debussy and Ravel with France, Valesquez with Spain, and so forth.

* *

The spirituals, blues and jazz have contributed much to the prestige of Aframericans. The Fisk Jubilee Singers and the various colored musical comedies such as Williams and Walker, Cole and Johnson, Whitney and Tutt, "Blackbirds," "Shuffle Along" and others have done much to favorably advertise the Negro genius.

Now comes Katherine Dunham with something entirely unique, a marvelously well-trained dance troupe with skillful choreography bringing to the appreciative audiences of the world the dance of the colored people from the South Seas, Brazil, Haiti, Martinique and other parts of the tropical world, including our Black Belts, North and South, and showing their relationship. It all seems to me to be as important to the colored world as the Imperial Russian Ballet was to Czarist Russia, and perhaps more so because these colored groups are in greater need of such publicity due to adverse propaganda stemming from centuries of slaveholder justification of exploitation of brown folk. It is to be hoped that the brilliant and beauteous Miss Dunham will continue her researches and present us next season with some of the marvelous dances of West and East Africa, as she has shown us this year a dance from Morocco.

In the meantime, the Spingarn Medal Awards Committee should seriously consider recognizing Miss Dunham's contribution to better racial understanding with the Spingarn Medal for 1944.

G & S on the Mississippi

Six years ago New Yorkers were regaled by several streamlined versions of the Gilbert and Sullivan *Mikado*. There were Federal Theater's *Swing Mikado*, Mike Todd's *Hot Mikado*, and a socially significant *Red Mikado* in Labor Stage's revue, *Pins and Needles*.

Latest G & S opus to get the up-to-the-minute treatment is *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which soon will be upon us as the basis of two new musicals —*Memphis Bound*, due Thursday, May 24, at the Broadway, and *The Hollywood Pinafore*, coming to the Alvin a week later.

An inspection of *Memphis Bound* just before it left for its current tryout in Boston revealed that a swing *Pinafore* has been worked into the show as a play within a play, i. e., a Mississippi showboat troupe stranded in a small river town decides to stage *Pinafore*. Most of *Memphis Bound's* first act is given over to the troupe's enactment of the G & S classic.

It is a fairly hep *Pinafore*, as one might deduce from a glance at the names of *Memphis Bound's* leading players: Bill Robinson, Avon Long —last seen here as Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess*—Ida James, Sheila Guys, Thelma Carpenter, the Delta Rhythm Boys, Ada Brown, Ann Robinson, Billy Daniels, Georgette Harvey and Frank Wilson. The show's book is by Sally Benson (*Meet Me in St. Louis*) and Albert Barker; its songs by Don Walker, who did the orchestrations for *Carousel*; and Clay Warnick. John Wildberg is producing *Memphis Bound* in association with Vinton Freedley.

The day after the musical's opening, Bill Robinson will celebrate his 67th birthday. *Memphis Bound* holds no terrors for the youthful dancing star: he will do his stair dance, play Sir Joseph Porter, KCB, in the *Pinafore* section of the show and even take part in a bit of *Trial by Jury* that has been thrown in for good measure. Robinson, you should know, is a veteran Savoyard; who else played the title role in *The Hot Mikado?*

Two Wisconsin Afro-American Dancers Lauded

MADISON, WIS. (ANP) — Students and townspeople jammed the University of Wisconsin theater to acclaim three students performances of Gluck's opera, "Orphous and Eurydice." As a production experiment, Ronald Mitchell, director of the theater, is responsible for combining pantemme, modern dancing and opera into an understandable story.

Two colored students for the first time were given major dance roles. Mary (Bunny) Hinkson, a student from Philadelphia, represented with Gluka Vogel, a brilliant modern dancea, and others ,the opera's nymphs and blessed spirits. Matt Hart Turney from Milwaukee received unrestrained plaudits for dance roles as one of the second act furies.

Gluck's opera was presented as a modern dance mime by Orchesis, the University Woman's dance group of which Hinkson and Turney are the first colored members.

Ethel Waters, who has not raised her voice in song on the local boards since "Laugh Time" (1943), will be heard and seen again this spring in a variety presentation

ETHEL WATERS GETS LEAD IN NEW SHOW

Singer Will Return to Local Boards in 'Wishing Tree'

Josh White to Co-Star

Dunham has been commissioned to stage the dances and Duke Ellington will compose the music. Other The former torch singer will be co-starred with Josh White, guitarist, who will be making his first stage appearance.

The presentation is described as the contribution of Harlem's "wishing tree," an old American entertainment and is not intended to be like that for many years attracted to the corner of 132d Street or prescribed and Seventh Avenue actors who sought engagements. Rehearsals are slated to get under way in two or three weeks, when Miss Waters is expected to arrive here from the Coast.

Esquire Mag Announces Its Jazz Poll Kings

Pittsburgh Courier 1-13-45

Esquire magazine, on the 100th anniversary of Jazz, today announced the winners in its second annual poll to select the outstanding kings of swing for 1945.

They will be featured on an hour and a half Blue network program January 17, with many of the winners, including the previously announced outstanding band—Duke Ellington's orchestra — performing in the second annual All-American Jazz concert at Los Angeles Philharmonic auditorium for the benefit of Volunteer Army Canteen service.

1-13-45

Gold award winners are: Cootie Williams, trumpet; Jay C. Higginbotham, trombone; Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Benny Goodman, clarinet; Teddy Wilson, piano; Al Casey, guitar; Oscar Pettiford, string bass; Sidney Catlett, drums; Red Norvo, vibraharp; Louis Armstrong, vocal; Mildred Bailey, vocal; Duke Ellington, arranger and band; Buck Clayton, trumpet (favorite in the Armed forces).

Silver award: Roy Eldridge, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, saxophone; Benny Carter, alto saxophone; Lester Young, tenor saxophone; Edmond Hall, clarinet; Art Tatum, piano; Oscar Moore, guitar; Slam Stewart, string bass; Dave Tough, drums; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone; Joe Turner, vocal; Billie Holliday, vocal; Billy Strayhorn, arranger; Count Basie, band; Willie Smith, alto saxophone (Armed Forces favorite).

New stars: Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet; Bill Harris, trombone; Herbie Fields, alto saxophone; Flip Phillips, tenor saxophone; Aaron Sachs, clarinet; Eddie Heywood, piano; Remo Palmieri, guitar; Chubby Jackson, string bass; Specs Powell, drums; Ray Nance, violin; Eddie Vinson, vocal; Anita O'Day, vocal; Johnny Thompson, arranger; Lionel Hampton, band; Mel Powell, piano (Armed Forces favorite.)

Lena, Lucky Entertain GIs

Hazel & W Coll.

Mo. 2-2-45

LOS ANGELES. — (NPB) — Lucky Millinder and his gifted orchestra can lay claim to the championship of American entertainers of servicemen. While countless numbers of entertainers have basked in the spotlight of publicity for their overseas contributions, several personalities like Lena Horne, Hattie Noels and the Lucky Millinder orchestra have gone tbout their way qietlly doing a splendid job in building morale for the soldiers in training and on the hospital front.

Miss Horne, lovely MGM studio singing star, only recently returned here after a lengthy tour of armed service hospitality throughout the south. She is preparing to embark on another tour which will by pass the south and its prejudices. Lucky Millinder and his orchestra crewmen have never been known to turn down a request to entertain for the armed services.

2-2-45

Lucky Millinder and his crewmen entertained servicemen in Washington and Oregon during their brief absence from this metropolis of the west, and not sooner had they returned here were they pounced upon to take over additional chores of keeping themselves available as a sustaining band for three successive Jubilee broadcasts to servicemen abroad. Two of the transcriptions were made at CBS studio and the other at NBC studio.

Lena Horne starred with the band when it appeared at the famed Hollywood Canteen and New Year's Day and the following Tuesday when it made transcriptions for oversea fighting men at NBC. The new singing find recently signed by Lucky Millinder, Melvin Moore was featured with Miss Horne at the Hollywood Canteen show. Ernest Whitman, the Jubilee Show Emcee, took care of that department at the NBC show which featured besides Miss Horne, Eddie Green of Duffy's Tavern radiocast show fame, the famed Lee Paul, instrumental trio and singer, Joe Adams. Ethel Waters starred on the recent Monday Jubilee show with the Lucky Millinder orchestra

African Festival At Carnegie Hall

PM. N.Y. 2-5-45

With Eleanor Roosevelt as guest of honor, the second annual festival of the African Academy of Arts and Research took place Wednesday night in Carnegie Hall. Mrs. Roosevelt, addressing the large audience at the beginning of the second half of the program, stated that the President joined her in the hope that the occasion would help "bring Africa and the United States closer together through mutual knowledge." Other speakers, who emphasized the Academy's aims to effect a lasting bond of co-operation, understanding and brotherhood between the two continents and races, were Commissioner Maurice P. Davidson, the Rev. James H. Robinson and Kingsley Ozoumba Mbadiwe, president of the African Academy.

9695

The program, entitled *African Dances and Modern Rhythms*, was admirably contrived to show the interrelation of native African dances and music with later manifestations of these arts in the Caribbean and the United States. Beginning with *Festival at Battalakor*, a lively exposition of 17th century West African tribal community life presented by Asadata Dafora and a large company of dancers, singers and drummers, the program progressed through a scene on a slave ship to examples of Western Hemisphere song and dance. Characteristic dances of Brazil and Cuba were presented with much gusto by Princess Orelia and Pedro; the Duke of Iron sang Trinidad Calypso numbers — one made up in honor of the African Academy and one that warned, "from a logical point of view, you'd better love a woman uglier than you"; and Josephine Premice offered two charming Haitian dances. This country was represented by Maurice Rocco's whirlwind brand of perpendicular boogie-woogie pianism. Bill Robinson's famous taps—this time to African drums—and Mary Lou Williams' accomplished jazz piano-playing.

4-6-45

There will be a repeat performance of *African Dances and Modern Rhythm* at Carnegie Hall tonight at 8:40. Gov. Raymond E. Baldwin of Connecticut will be guest of honor and speaker.

MARY LOU WILLIAMS (center), jazz pianist of Cafe Society Downtown, will appear in a joint recital with dancers Freda Flier (left), William Bales and Jane Dudley at Central Auditorium on Friday evening, Mar. 2, under the auspices of the Citizens Committee of the Upper West Side. The dance trio will offer its popular *Folksay* in which it will be accompanied by folk singers Woody Guthrie and Tony Kraber. Tickets, priced from $2.40 to $1.20, are available at the Committee's office, 122 W. 71st (EN 2-4197). *Photo by Wilbert Blanche, PM*

PM. N.Y. 2-22-45

Tiny Grimes Chucked Piano for Guitar and Top Title

Down Beat 4-15-45

By DON DELEIGHBUR

NEW YORK—Meet the world's fastest guitar player.

His name is Lloyd (Tiny) Grimes, and his claim to fame is that he matched on his guitar note for note the breakneck speed of the piano playing of the great and incredible Art Tatum, blind genius of the keyboard.

Grimes, whose records prove his claim, played for a year as a part of the Art Tatum Trio that included the fabulous Slam Stewart on bass. It is on the record, "I Know That You Know" that Grimes proves what he claims.

Tatum Couldn't Lose Tiny

Tatum all through the number tried his best to shake Grimes and Stewart off his neck in one of the greatest suspended pieces of driving furiously-paced swing music I have ever heard by art. When the record ends, you find Grimes right there with him as is Stewart.

Tiny right now is rehearsing with Cozy Coles, drumming star of "Carmen Jones," for the spot in Billy's Rose's "The Seven Lively Arts."

Native of Virginia

A native of Newport News, Va., he came to New York in 1934 as a piano player with his own trio. He joined the Cats and a Fiddle in 1941 and stayed with them for a year. He then went to California where he met Tatum.

Grimes worked with Tatum for about one year and nine months, beginning at the Streets of Paris in Los Angeles and eventually East to open at Fifty-second Street's famous Three Deuces.

Long List of Recordings

He made about ten recordings with Tataum and his list also includes ten sides with Coleman Hawkins, about one dozen sides with Cozy Coles, and other recordings with Ike Quebec, tenor saxophonist.

Grimes, who manages himself, gives all the credit to his wife, Chinky Grimes, an exotic dancer, now appearing at the El Grotto in Chicago, and to whom he was married in 1941. He wants most of all to have a quintet like Louis Jordan's. "Big bands are too much trouble," he says.

88b-1945

C.-J. Photo.

AGLOW with grins, Janatine Ritchie, Allais, Ky., left, and Patricia Osborne, 2537 Congress—patients at Kosair Crippled Children Home—enjoy special show by Bill Robinson.

Bill Robinson Dances His Way Into Hearts of Kosair Children

The Courier Journal
Louisville, Kentucky

"Goody!" exclaimed a brown-eyed youngster in the back row of beds, and that summed audience reaction yesterday to the performance of Bill Robinson, who shuffled and strutted and grinned his way into the affections of 50 patients at the Kosair Crippled Children Home.

Robinson, "Uncle Bill" to the youngsters, closed his half-hour program with a promise to return "any time I'm in the city." "And you don't have to ask me will I come; just tell me what time you want me," he added—a statement which drew almost as much applause as his famous soft-shoe shuffle. 11-7-45

But a foot-high dummy almost stole the show from "Bojangles." The doll, part of the cast of the New York production of "Ho, Mikado," shuffled and strutted in exact duplication of Bill, as the stage star proved himself as nimble with his fingers as with his feet.

In addition to his dancing, Robinson also entertained the children with imitations—most popular being his cleverly contrived mimicry of a mosquito lighting on a piece of limburger cheese.

Pink and blue hair ribbons upbobbed and legs in casts kept time to the boogie beat of "I've Got Rhythm" and a little girl in a wheel chair exclaimed, "Gee, isn't he wonderful?"

This sentiment Robinson echoed—in reverse—a few minutes later. "They're wonderful, aren't they?" he smiled. "This is my second visit here and they're the grandest audience a performer ever had."

As an "opener" before Bill arrived, two tiny patients—5-year-old Patsy Osborne and 6-year-old Janatine Ritchie—sang "Bell Bottom Trousers," "Don't Sweetheart Me" and "You Are My Sunshine" with almost as much professional aplomb as displayed by the girls' trio traveling with Robinson, who officially opened the program with the singing of "Sentimental Journey." Robinson currently is appearing at the National Theater.

Musical

Bill Robinson Is Booked For Mosque Appearance

Richmond Times-Dispatch
Richmond, Virginia

"BOJANGLES," Richmond's own Bill Robinson, the boy who is nearing 70 and still the king of precision tap dancing, is coming to the Mosque in a show December 18.

His last visit to the city, which was a private affair, was last Summer, when he and his wife made a tour of his old neighborhood and he took a picture of his birthplace at 915 North Third St.

Bill, who made up his famous stairsteps dance routine on the steps of a police station that stood at Sixth and Marshall, left this city when he was 7 and joined up with a road show which was presenting "The Old South." 12-2-45

REAL opportunity, however, didn't come a-knocking at Bill's door. He literally spilled the soup right into its lap, and from that fateful day to this he has been skipping all around the throne he built for himself as "King of Tap Dancers."

Bill has been dancing for as many years as he can walk, but at one time he wasn't doing so well in Richmond, where he was born the grandson of a slave. Aspiring to be a jockey, Bill had haunted the race tracks, but somehow he was dancing more than he was riding. An impresario picked him up for a spectacle, "The South Before the War," and, for $5 a week and board, Robinson toured the country.

BACK in Richmond without a job, he went to work in a hotel waiting on tables and on his first day there Marty Forkins, now his manager, was a dinner guest. He ordered soup and Bill brought it—and spilled it. Bill says now he trembled and ran.

The head waiter apologized to Marty, explaining that Bill was not really a waiter, but a dancer. In fact, one of the best he had ever seen, said the head waiter. Robinson was known then as "Snowbird" to the people of Richmond. They had seen him do his famous stairstep routine all over the city, even on the steps of the State Capitol.

Marty was interested and Bill was called back. It was the beginning of an association which has lasted through the years.

GUITARIST SIDNEY GROSS & FELLOW JIVERS
They didn't get the contact.

12-

Tea & Jam Time

On the stage it looked and sounded like a rich, ripe American swingfest. The unrehearsed band, including a West Indies Negro drummer and three American G.I.s, played all around such jazz standbys as *Body and Soul* and *Sweet Georgia Brown*, and really got hot on Benny Goodman's old *Don't Be That Way*. Pace setter was the hot sax of Private Arthur Pepper, formerly with Gus Arnheim's band—where Bing Crosby first got his start as a soloist.

But the audience was a very different matter. The 1,400 young Britons (at about four shillings a head) in London's Adelphi Theater last week were about the age of U.S. jitterbugs, but they wore starched white collars, sat quietly and attentively, trying to understand. Nobody romped in the aisles, though a few bold souls gently stomped their feet. The two-and-a-half-hour jam session was broken by a 15-minute intermission, so that the audience could have tea. 12-3-45

The man who brought jam to tea-drinking Englishmen is a 30-year-old R.A.F. musician named Sidney Gross. Before the war he was a night club guitarist who liked to play American style with a few friends after hours. Then he heard the Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw bands play for the R.A.F. "When most English players [illegible] Americans, they are so depressed they want to put their instruments away," says Gross. Instead, he wanted to go and do likewise.

Last winter he got leave, scurried to London to round up some musical cronies, rented a hall in suburban Wembley. He packed the hall for three concerts. In the concerts at the larger Adelphi Theater he has had to turn away crowds. Last week's show at the Adelphi sold better than the last time the London Philharmonic played there. To the first session Gross invited a handful of notables to come and hear for themselves. Sir Adrian Boult, Pianist Myra Hess and Composer Benjamin Britten sent regrets, but Mrs. Anthony Eden came, and wrote a fan letter. Tenor Richard Tauber stuck it out for two hours, then said politely: "This is . . . a complete change from the music to which I am accustomed."

Said one of the U.S. musicians of his reticent audience: "They don't get it. I don't mean that the English don't scream. That's superficial. I mean they don't get it and the musicians don't get the contact."

New York Times - N. Y. - 12-23-45

Albert A. Freeman

Taking part in the "Best in American Jazz" concert Saturday afternoon are Mary Lou Williams, Johnny Williams, Ed Hall and Jimmy Crawford. 12-23-45

Legends of 'Bojangles'

Richmond Times Dispatch, Va.

THREE score years, most of which Bill Robinson has spent dancing, are time enough for many legends to flourish. And "Bojangles," the greatest tap dancer of them all, is the subject of a good many that are told and retold wherever show folks and Richmonders congregate.

Across the years, Bill, a Richmond boy, has danced his way to prominence in the art of precision rhythms. There is no dispute to his title of "The King of Tap Dancers" among the countless numbers who know him from the stage and movies.

At 67, he has yet no challengers to the crown he will still be wearing when he unlimbers his feet on the stage of the Mosque Thursday night. With him will be a concert revue, featuring for the first time in Richmond "The Four Knights," a unique group of four voices and guitar. Originally from Charlotte, N. C., the group can blend their talents into renditions of spirituals and folk songs of the Negro race as well as modern arrangements of popular and novelty tunes.

Tickets for the show went on sale last week at the Virginia Record Shop and Slaughter's Hotel. Mezzanine and balcony seats will be reserved for Negro patrons.

One of the great myths about Bill Robinson is where he got his nickname of "Bojangles." In Memphis and in Nashville, they will tell you that the word is authentic, meaning "good guy" or "happy-go-lucky." To one Des Williams goes the credit for affixing the appellation onto Robinson.

The story runs back to 1913 and the gray light of a dawn, following an all-night gambling session. Robinson, emerging a winner, walked down the street in that characteristic light-footed way of his, and he went into a dance, humming as he tapped. The taps quickened, the humming grew louder, he let his feet go with a gayety that seemed to ring on the pavements with the sound of happy-go-lucky, happy-go-lucky. Williams caught the rhythm and the sound, and watched, entranced. 12-9-45

"Bojangles, Bojangles," he is said to have cried, and Bill has been "Bojangles" ever since.

Another of the well-known stories about Bill, which is testimony to his cool-headedness and extraordinary talent, concerns a huge rat which marched down the aisle of a New York theater during his act, and climbed onto the stage as though to get a better view of the tapping feet.

When Bill spied the animal, his dance slowed up, but he did not stop. Several women on the front row squirmed. One let out a cry. Bill, still dancing, vanished in the wings and came right back waving a stick with a gesture of assurance to the audience. The rodent sat up curiously, and Bill shuffled up to him, let the stick fly, and got the animal squarely in the chest. Still dancing, he polished it off with a blow on the head.

The audience heaved a sigh of relief, and the famous feet picked up the gay rhythm of "happy-go-lucky, happy-go-lucky."

12-9-45

Bill Robinson, who will tap his way into the Mosque Thursday.

Negro Band Leader In Ballroom Row

Birmingham News

KANSAS CITY, Dec. 24 — (AP) — Cab Calloway, Negro "hi-de-ho" band leader, was treated at General Hospital here for cuts on the head and booked on a charge of intoxication and resisting arrest as a result of what police said was an argument over entering a public ballroom here Saturday night.

Police Sgt. William Garrett said Calloway told him he and another Negro, Felix H. Payne, of Kansas City, purchased tickets at the ballroom to call on Negro Band Leader Lionel Hampton, but were denied admittance by William Todd, special officer employed by the dance hall.

Ala.

Hampton refused to permit his orchestra to finish their evening's engagement when he learned of the incident, and 1,500 patrons got their money back. 12-24-45

Police said Todd asserted he had refunded money for the tickets and asked Calloway and Payne to leave because the management did not admit Negroes. He told police Payne struck him and Calloway pushed him to the floor. Then, he said, he drew his revolver and hit Calloway "over the head several times." 12-24-45

Payne, who was booked on the same charges as Calloway, denied he struck Todd.

Calloway said he did not care to comment until he "talked to a lawyer." He departed for Topeka to play an engagement last night after posting $500 bail.

'ST. LOUIS WOMAN' ARRIVES IN MARCH

New York, N.Y.

Edward Gross to Present All-Negro Musical of Nineties— Ruby Hill to Play Lead

New York Times

By SAM ZOLOTOW

Out of the west came Edward Gross in the spring of last year to make his bow as the producer of "Chicken Every Sunday." Since then he has become thoroughly acquainted with the strength of all the ropes and should know his way around the Roaring Forties. For a long time he has been concentrating on "St. Louis Woman," a musical reflecting Negro life of the Gay Nineties in St. Louis. Yesterday we heard that the all-Negro show was marking time for rehearsals to start on Jan. 2. Slated to arrive here the week of March 4, the attraction will be presented in New Haven, Jan. 31; Boston, Feb. 4; Philadelphia, Feb. 18.

Once mentioned for Lena Horne, the leading role will be filled by Ruby Hill in her professional stage debut. Entrusting such a major assignment to a newcomer isn't worrying the producer a bit. To perfect herself in the part, Miss Hill is receiving vocal and dramatic instruction from Hollywood experts. 12-11-45

Also standing by are Lemuel Ayers, better known as a scenic designer who will attend to the direction and do the scenery; Leon Leonardi, musical director, as well as a company including the Nicholas Brothers, Rex Ingram, Pearl Bailey, June Hawkins and Bertha Powell. Lacking at the moment are a Negro facsimile of Burl Ives and a choreographer. Otherwise, the songs from a competent team of tunesmiths, Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer, are on tap and so is the final script of the Countee Cullen-Arna Bontemps plot, emanating from the latter's book, "God Sends Sunday." In play form the hinterland has seen various presentations of "St. Louis Woman."

Financially interested in the offering besides Mr. Gross are Sam Katz and Arthur Freed of Hollywood. Edward Choate will be the general manager. Offices have been established at 1270 Sixth Avenue.

88b-1945

Musical- Carmen Jones

"Carmen Jones" to End Broadway Run Saturday

AFRO-American Balt, Md. 2-10-45

NEW YORK—"Carmen Jones," the all-colored version of Bizet's opera, written by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd, will end its New York run Saturday night at the Broadway Theatre after seventy weeks and 504 performances. It will reopen in Los Angeles at the Civic Auditorium on June 4 and then go on tour.

The musical opened here on December 2, 1943, following its premiere in Philadelphia.

Muriel Smith of Philadelphia and Muriel Rahn of New York alternated in the leading role until the latter withdrew after more than 150 performances to resume concert work. Inez Matthews, an understudy, then began assisting Miss Smith. 2-10-45

The play, which was produced by Billy Rose at an approximate cost of $175,000, has netted Rose more than a million dollars since playing on Broadway, where it has outlived a number of all-colored cast plays with the exception of "Anna Lucasta," now playing the Mansfield Theatre.

In the meantime, both Harry Wagstaff Gribble, director, and John Proctor, member of the cast of "Anna Lucasta," are collaborating on a yet untitled comedy with racial implications.

'CARMEN' CLOSES BROADWAY RUN

2-10-45

Pittsburgh Courier

NEW YORK—Billy Rose's successful production, "Carmen Jones," closed at the Broadway Theatre on Feb. 10. 2-10-45

The production opened here in December of 1943 with a cast of more than 100, and will have played a total of 502 performances. Based on Bizet's "Carmen," the musical contains a new version of the libretto, by Oscar Hammerstein II, who wrote new lyrics.

After some recasting, plans are under way for an opening production at the Biltmore Theater in Los Angeles on June 4 for an engagement of four weeks. This will be the beginning of a cross-country tour that is to last a year and a half. With the exception of Washington and Baltimore, practically every major city in the country will witness the show.

MISS JONES RETURNS: *Carmen Jones*, which concluded a 14-month Broadway run last February, came to the City Center last night for a two-and-a-half week stop before embarking on a nationwide tour. Above, title-role'st Muriel Smith watches a rehearsal with Randall Steplight (left) who has taken over the choral direction, replacing Army-bound Robert Shaw, and Sheldon B. Hoskins, who has restaged the dances.

First Stop—New York!

New York Times 4-29-45

Inez Matthews (left) and Muriel Smith, alternates in the title role of "Carmen Jones," which starts its national tour at the City Center Wednesday.

Hammerstein's 'Carmen

D.V. Times 2-18-

CARMEN JONES. By Oscar Hammerstein 2d. Based on Meilhac and Halevy's Adaptation of Prosper Merimee's "Carmen." 139 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

AT this late date no theatregoer has to be reminded how well the Carmen (or all-for-love) formula translates into dramatic terms — provided it is given the proper exotic touch. Some twenty seasons ago "Lulu Belle" (Edward Sheldon and Charles MacArthur's rendition) turned out to be almost-pure Carmen, down to Lenore Ulric's dying quiver. Last season the veteran librettist, Oscar Hammerstein 2d, refined the processing still farther by stepping up the actual Meilhac and Halévy book into Southern Negro dialect, penciling in some free-hand connecting dialogue and projecting the whole in the framework of Negro cantonment life in World War II. Billy Rose gave it one of his typically fabulous productions, with the Bizet score reasonably intact — and "Carmen Jones" closed its Broadway run only a few days ago, after more than 500 performances.

The theatregoer may now read the printed text of the Hammerstein libretto, if he's at all curious about such things, and marvel at the author's legerdemain. Thanks to a remarkably meaty introduction, he may also learn that Mr. Hammerstein has been yearning to do just such a job on grand opera ever since he was exposed, as a boy, to his first hearing of Donizetti. ("Listening to people sing words you didn't understand wasn't much fun. That's what I thought then. That's what I think now.") The end-product was meant to be heard, of course, and not read; "Carmen Jones" offers no more rewards to the armchair-browser than the average operatic book. Still, it is fascinating to see how smoothly the toreador song translates on a black prize-fighter's lips. And only the die-hard purist will object to the rendition of Carmen's famous over all motivation ("Si tu ne m'aime pas, je t'aime, et si je t'aime prends garde à toi!") as

You go for me an' I'm taboo,
But if yore hard to get I go for you, 2-18-45
An' if I do, den you are through, boy, N.Y.
My baby, da's de en' of you!

Try it over with the "Habanera" music. You may find it hard to resist. W. D.

"Carmen" Closes B'way Theatre

A.P. Wire Service N.Y.
2-17-45 Mid-

By STAFF CORRESPONDENT

NEW YORK—"Carmen Jones," the Bizert opera with an all-colored cast, closed Saturday night at the Broadway Theatre after 504 performances and will embark on a road tour as soon as a new cast can be assembled.

In the meantime, Muriel Smith, who played the leading role of "Carmen," has been signed along with Avon Long, Sportin' Life of "Porgy and Bess," for an engagement at Cafe Society Uptown, where William Franklin, Porgy of the same cast, will open as soloist, replacing Elwood Smith, baritone.

Balt. Md.

When "Carmen Jones" closed on Saturday only five of its original members were advised that they will be accepted for the road tour, which metans that practically a new cast will be assembled.

Among those advised of the opening are Miss Smith and Inez Matthews, alternate Carmen; Napoleon Reid and Luther Saxon, the two Joes, and Glenn Bryant, who played the role of Husky Miller. The show is scheduled to begin its road tour on June 4 in Los Angeles, if the cast is completed by that time.

The tour lists most of the larger cities from coast to coast with the exception of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Md.

SEATTLE, WASH.
STAR
Circ. D. 68,956
JUL 7-1945

2 SHARE

Pair Alternates In the Title Role

Two top Negro singers will alternate in the title role of "Carmen Jones," when this extravagant musical production opens its engagement on the Metropolitan theater stage, August 5.

First is Muriel Smith, 20-year-old beauty, who's life story is an actual and true Cinderella yarn in all detail. Born and raised in New York, she was always interested in music and sang at various churches and school functions, until she was heard, accidentally by Elizabeth Westmoreland, a member of the Curtis Institute faculty.

CARMEN JONES' LEAD

AUGUST 5—Muriel Smith alternates in the title role with Inez Matthews as Carmen in "Carmen Jones," the Billy Rose production coming to the stage of the Metropolitan theater.

A scholarship followed at Curtis and she moved to Philadelphia for three years of hard work.

She was employed in a camera shop at $15 a week, when she was brought to Billy Rose's attention.

The second "Carmen" is Inez Matthews. She is the daughter of Rev. Edward Matthews of New York, and a sister of Edward Matthews, well-known Negro singer. She was singing in her father's church choir when she was taken under the wing of Mrs. Katherine Moran Douglas, former Metropolitan opera star. She has appeared in a number of concerts in New York stage and some concert work. She was understudy to the role of Lizarda in the Lunt-Fontainne "Pirates."

88b-1945

Musicals Memphis Bound

CINCINNATI, O.
ENQUIRER
Cir. D. 125,806—S. 217,398

JUN 13 - 1945

"Round Trip" Lays An Egg; "Memphis Bound" Misses Boat

(Special Dispatch From Enquirer's New York Bureau.)

NEW YORK, JUNE 2—

"ROUND TRIP," a so-called comedy by Mary Orr and Reginald Denham, opening at the Biltmore Theater, might be termed a moral strip tease. The four principals in the play get all mixed up in their relationships, but they all end where they started with the audience assured that despite all the circumstantial evidence, it is not so.

While the principals get back to where they started from, their round trip is through a series of stage episodes that are anemic in charm, humor, allurement or interest. If any of the leads had gone through with his expressed desires, he might have engendered a play, or even a comedy. But as it is, they developed only frustrations that made them look silly. The silliness reached its climax in the third act, which was about as silly without being anything else as anything any playwright has inflicted upon a bored and patient public.

* * *

IN BRIEF OUTLINE, a ham actor from New York descends upon a drama club in Ironville, Ohio, to direct its current dramatic presentation. The leading exponent of the drama in Ironville is the wife of a leading Iron Master. She is stage-struck and encouraged by the actor, who is "angel" hungry. She pursues him to New York, much to the personal embarrassment of his "girl friend." The husband follows his fleeing wife, and on being rebuffed, gets even by going back to Ironville with the actor's girl, who is an accomplished secretary. In the end, the actor takes his girl back to New York, and the husband takes his wife back into the home—all assuring every one that while each had "aspired" none had "achieved." No one in the audience seemed to give a damn, anyway.

* * *

THE CAST isn't bad. Phyllis Brooks as the girl friend is attractive and does what she can with the role, June Walker, the featured wife, makes the part as silly as it is conceived to be. Sidney Blackmeer as the husband and Eddie Nugent as the actor do fairly well.

The actor satirizes Ohio as the home of "half dead Republicans." That about illustrated its humor.

"Memphis Bound"

NEW YORK, JUNE 2.

"Memphis Bound," second all-Negro musical to strut the Broadway stage in the last fortnight, is interesting, colorful and tuneful. But when it strays on its own route toward the southern river town, it sags quite noticeably.

WHEN stringing along with its inspiration, "Pinafore," not matter how it all works out, for the boat still is Memphis bound and the plot (what there is of it) idea bound when the final curtain drops.

There is a lot of dancing of a frenetic nature, much roistering, several pleasant songs and choruses. The audience liked it a lot. We liked Bill Robinson and thought some of the Pinafore parody clever. But without Bill, the show would be pretty ordinary, we feel. The lyrics and music are by Don Walker and Clay Warnick and the book by Albert Barker and Sally Benson. The program notes that the outhors-composers present their work "with gratitude to W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan."

The Sullivan tunes and the Gilbertian lines, either straight or jazzed, maintain their freshness. The introduction of the "Pinafore" scenes are evolved in a presentation of the operetta by the members of the Calliboga, Tenn., social drama center, with the purpose of financing the river steamer off the mudflats near the town.

The parody on "Pinafore" is beautifully staged and excellently done. Bill Robinson is the Lord High Admiral, singing the ditties with distinction and stepping in a manner engaging and entertaining, but hardly in the manner of the "King's Navy." His sisters, his cousins and his aunts are out in force. Robinson is the star of the show. It lags or speeds up in response to his entrances and exits. He was 67 last Friday night and is as light on his feet as if he were 27. He still does the up-and-down stairs stunt with his usual eclat.

Avon Long is featured with Robinson and does pretty well, though quite overshadowed by the better known star. In the "Pinafore" sketch, Long is Captain of the ship. He is a good dancer with a passable voice. As Captain he has his daughter, Josephine, as triplets. This was an appeasement measure by the lady who produces the show, for she had promised the mothers of three of her vocal students their chance. The idea is a clever one, but the authors seem to be stymied after evolving it. Sheila Guys, one of the trips, is an extremely good looker.

Ada Brown sings the part of Buttercup. She has a fair voice, the only feminine member of the cast who can be accused of having one. She interprets the Gilbertian lines with some insight. In most part the Gilbertian flavor is lost by the members of the cast.

In addition to the Pinafore sketch, the musical revolves around the incarceration of Robinson, who is the pilot of the stranded river boat as well as a kleptomaniac. Bill prefers to lounge in jail as a safeguard against carrying out a promise to marry a lady on his trail, the promise having been made many years before. It does

Bill Robinson, 67-year-old past master of tap, now dancing on Broadway, told an interviewer that his real name was Luther, and recalled how he had changed it: "I said to myself, 'I'll never go about the world with nobody callin' me Luther,' so I caught my brother whose name was Bill and I gave him a good whippin'. I told him that from now on his name was Percy and mine was Bill. He's in North Carolina now, and he's still Percy Robinson." Time Mag. 6-25-45

'Memphis Bound' Folds after 36 Performances

Afro-American 6-30-45

NEW YORK—The last of the all-colored Broadway musicals, "Memphis Bound," called it quits Saturday night after a short run of 36 performances, leaving the backers holding an empty bag. The first to close was "Blue Holiday," after only eight performances.

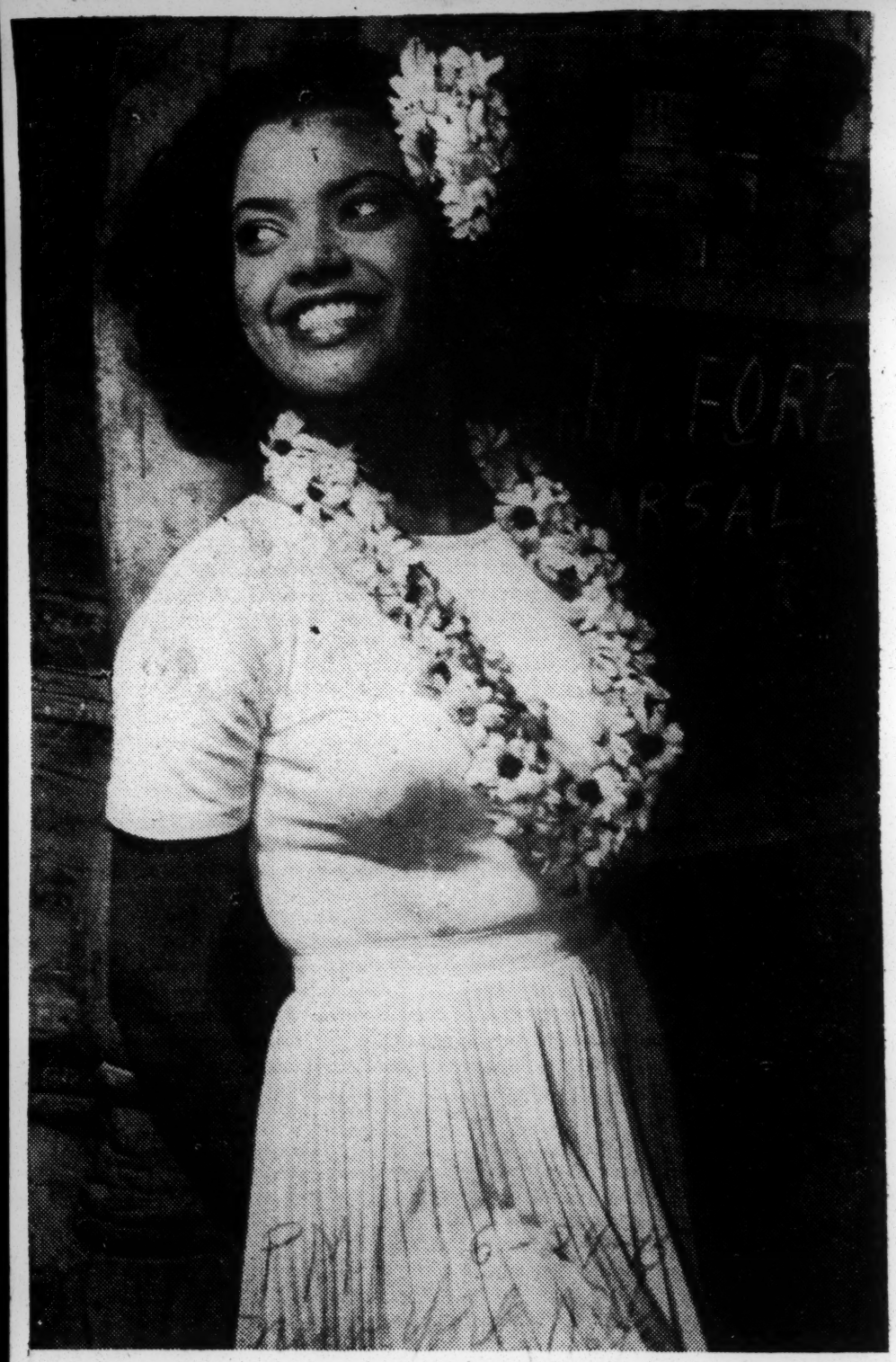
"Memphis Bound," starring Bill Robinson and featuring Avon Long, fared better at the hands of the reviewers than did "Blue Holiday," in which Ethel Waters was the star, supported by Josh White.

The total investment in "Memphis Bound" was $145,000. A weekly gross of $18,000 was necessary to cover the overhead, which included salaries for a company of seventy-four, twenty-six musicians and twenty-eight stage hands.

Declined After Moving

Since moving from the Broadway Theatre on June 11 to the Belasco, the box-office intake declined sharply. On Thursday, the backers, including Producer John Wildberg, who had a personal stake of $50,000 in it, were asked for an additional $25,000 to serve as a cushion, but the cash wasn't forthcoming. 6-30-45

The bowing out of "Memphis Bound" leaves but one all-colored show on the Main Stem and that's "Anna Lucasta," another Wildberg production, which has passed its 300th performance. Ethel Waters's "Mambas Daughters, revised version, is playing the sub-circuit.



Winchell said a while back that Sheila Guys (above), who sings in *Memphis Bound,* "was picking cotton in Mississippi eight weeks ago." We checked. 'The nearest I ever came to it," Sheila told us, "was on a recent visit South. I pulled a few bolls of it just to see what it was like. I don't know who was responsible for the story." Sheila, 19, was born in Forrest, Miss., pop. 4000. Her father is a seaman. "We moved to New York when I was still a baby," Sheila said, "so you couldn't very well call me a Southerner." She went to high school in Oakland, Cal., learned to love Hawaiian music, sang in glee clubs, finally—about a year ago—decided to become a night-club singer. She got a six-week singing job at the Club Zombie, in Detroit, then as vocalist with Joe Turner's band. The curfew put an end to that and she came to New York, "feeling pretty blue." Then someone at the American Guild of Variety Artists introduced her to John Wildberg, producer of *Memphis Bound.* She was signed up.

88b-1945

Orchestra Leaders

Everett Lee, First Negro Musician To Lead Orchestra in Bway Play

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

10-13-45

By BETH McHENRY

Everett Lee, the gifted young conductor of the **On the Town** orchestra at the Martin Beck Theatre, was suprised when he was given the post but the rest of the orchestra and cast were only glad.

Mr. Lee, who at 25, has the distinction of being the first Negro musician to lead an orchestra in a Broadway production, is not a newcomer to the world of music. His talent discovered at 8, he became a member of the Cleveland Philharmonic at 18. Between rehearsals and other studies he also was an outstanding track athlete — until race bias became a painful reality to him. He told off the high school coach and walked off the track, never to return to it.

Everett Lee and his violin became known beyond Cleveland, and while he was in the army in 1942 there were many anxious inquiries from producers about him. After an injury on the field at the Air Corps Base in Tuskeegee, Ala., Lee was discharged and went with Carmen Jones, which was opening then in New York. He expects to stay here and work, later hoping to go to Europe and the Soviet Union and to the countries of South America.

EVERETT LEE

Everett Lee said his greatest pleasure in becoming a conductor was in the obvious delight of his fellow musicians and the actors and actresses of **On The Town.**

"All of the orchestra seemed as pleased as if it were themselves who had been selected," he told us. "For that matter, **On The Town** is a great show, all around. It has done some splendid pioneering work on Broadway."

10-13-45

What he referred to particularly, he said, was the integration of Negro artists with others in the cast of **On The Town**, not in the usual "specialty number" category but in the regular assembly of dancers. Mr. Lee attributes this to the honest and democratic ideas and efforts of the musical's authors—Betty Comden and Adolph Green and to the cooperative efforts of the whole cast. He himself was urged to come to this show by Leonard Bernstein, the composer, who has recently replaced Leopold Stokowski as conductor of the New York City Symphony Orchestra.

ENJOYS CONDUCTING

Mr. Lee said he was glad to have been made a conductor—largely because he loves conducting, and also because of his people. After all, he said, what talent I have came from what I did.

10-13-45

As for his background, Everett Lee grew up in Cleveland, the son of working people among whom there were no previous outstanding musicians. He had, however, the sympathetic appreciation of his family in all of his efforts. He now lives all of the time in New York City with a wife and a son just younger than a year, who is something of an orchestra by himself.

Calloway Holds Sway Tonight at Mosque.

Richmond Time Dispatch

"His Royal Highness of Hi De Ho," Cab Calloway, and his orchestra, will play a concert at the Mosque at 8:45 P. M. today.

Featured with the orchestra will be Dotty Saulters, vocalist, and three members of Esquire's All-American Band: Jonah Jones, trombonist, Tyree Glenn and Milton Hinton.

Richmond, Va.

In addition to being a first class showman in his own right, Cab waves a baton over an orchestra which is credited by musicians and bandleaders as one of the finest today.

11-12-45

Complementing him is an intra-organization, known as the "Cab Jivers," who will also be heard tonight.

Cab Calloway Gave Up Law For Baton

Richmond Times Dispatch

Richmond, Va.

11-11-45

COLLEGE was not a pushover for Cab Calloway. Earning his way to attend law classes at Crane College, in Chicago, was not a matter of waiting tables, mowing lawns, or serving as a cashier.

His highness of hi de ho, who will play with his orchestra at the Mosque tomorrow night, earned his way as a singer in a night club on the South Side of the Windy City. Cab was the master

Cab Calloway

of ceremonies and singer in the revue at the Sunset Cafe, a Volstead era hot spot.

The first show was at 7 P. M. and the last one was completed about 5 A. M. Between shows Cab sat in his cubicle and prepared his lessons for the next day. As soon as his job was completed for the night, Cab rushed to his hotel and caught the well-known 40 winks before his first class at 10 A. M.

The lure of show business, however, was too much for the youthful Cab to resist. After attending Crane College for two years, he put aside his study books and took up a baton. While he could successfully double between a classroom and a night club, he could not do both while conducting an orchestra. Out-of-town engagements prevented it.

His career in the show business has covered all the usual courses. When the Cotton Club, where he made his first New York success, closed, Cab took to the road and played in leading hotels and cafes from coast to coast. He has not been camera shy, either. In 1943, he received the Negro Actors Guild "Oscar" for the Twentieth Century Fox film, "Stormy Weather." His 1944 efforts included a starring role in Andrew Stone's "Sensations of 1945."

11-11-45

Recording for Columbia under the Okeh label, Calloway has kept the juke boxes humming. Some of the most recent best-selling platters are "Jumping Jive," "St. Louis Blues," "I'll Be Around," "A Smooth One," and "Let's Go Joe." Of course, the famous "Minnie the Moocher" is now a collector's item.

Appearing here with Cab tomorrow night will be Dorothy Saulters, Jonah Jones, Tyree Glenn, and Milton Hinton, Esquire's All-Americans, and the Cab Jivers.

'Count' Basie, Swing King Brings Band Here Friday

Richmond Time-Dispatch

Richmond Virginia

WILLIAM "COUNT" BASIE, famous jump king of swing, and his orchestra will play at the Mosque Friday night, December 7, at 8:30 o'clock under the sponsorship of Sanna Grotto. Tickets are on sale at Virginia Record Shop.

'Count' Basie

Included in the Basie band is what is regarded as one of the greatest rhythm sections in the country. With Jo Jones at the drums, Freddie Greene on the guitar, Walter Page on bass and the Count himself at the piano, the Basie rhythm section is described by music critics as the finest in the history of modern music. 12-2-43

It is Basie's distinct style which has set the pattern for most of the name bands on Tin Pan Alley today.

Bill Basie gained his title of "Count" while in Chicago. Down and out and without fare for a trip back home to Red Bank, N. J., he filled in at a nickel movie house as piano player with the local orchestra. The royal manner in which Basie conducted himself when his fingers struck a piano keyboard earned him the title of "Count" from the house manager and the musicians in the band. From then on, the title stuck. 12-2-43

Featured in the band is 250-pound James Rushing, whose manner of handling blues tunes is a favorite with music fans from coast to coast. Jive fans know him as the inspiration for the hit song, "Mr. Five by Five."

Benny Goodman and Vibraharpist Red Norvo inspire each other during the Sextet's rendition of *It's Gotta Be This or That.* Goodman's recording of this is a best seller.

"Slam" Stewart, formerly of Art Tatum Trio and "Slim and Slam" duet, now with Goodman Sextet, bows as well as plucks double bass. He sometimes grunts a vocal.

Life - August 20, 1945

BENNY GOODMAN MAKES A COMEBACK

N.Y., N.Y.

Last week jazz fans who deplored the success corniness had brought Louis Prima had one thing to feel good about. Benny Goodman, once "King of Swing," had regained his throne after a record-breaking theater tour. Only the Negroes Duke Ellington and Count Basie could boast of better bigtime swing bands than his.

Five years ago Benny Goodman broke up his long-famous band because of a kind of back trouble doctors sometimes call a "slipped disc," a term which Benny Goodman has recently honored by making a new record called "Slipped Disc." Now 36, Benny has made himself a considerable reputation as a classical clarinetist. His beautiful tone, lightning fingers and good musicianship enable him to take part in a Mozart quintet as skillfully as in hot music. But his success with the classics has not alienated him from his first love. Benny's most joyful moments still come when he and his Sextet weave delicate jazz patterns around an old tune like *After You've Gone.*

Louis Jordan Scales The Lofty Ladder Of Success

The Saint Louis Argus St. Louis, Missouri

9-21-45

Hard Work Is Behind Zanzibar Engagement

(by DOLORES CALVIN)

NEW YORK CITY—(Calvin's News Service)—When Mr. Louis Jordan comes to the Zanzibar Cafe Wednesday eve to begin an 8 week engagment, it will mark the dapper 38 year old music maker's first appearance in a Broadway nite club. In fact, the last time Mr. Jordan appeared in a nightspot anywhere in New York was at the Elk's Rendezvous back in 1938 when he was just organizing his Tympani Five. But since then, Mr. Jordan has come a long way.

Take the last eight months, for instance. In that short time, working every day (except for about two weeks in May taken off to have his tonsils yanked), Louis Jordan's agenda has run like an Ernie Pyle diary—events popping up so often and so outstanding as to insure the title the Tympany Five are tagged with: America's favorite little band.

LOUIS JORDAN

Got $14 Per

A month after the New Year, Louie made his first appearance at the Paramount Theatre in Times Square and found the managers anxious to get him back within 3½ months. Instead of returning, he toured the South, played the Apollo for the 5th time in the last 2½ years, toured again, then made an initial appearance at the Chicago Theatre for 2 weeks. It was an occasion because across the street is the Capitol Lounge where the original Jordan boys were on the bill with the Mills Brothers and where the famous Mr. Jordan drew a salary of $14 a week, paying his musicians mostly out of his own pocket. And that's where he met his manager, Berle Adams, then 23.

But back to 1945, the tonsils came out after the Chicago Theater date and Louis recuperated in his Harvey, Ill. home, (while revising the entire band) before another middle-west tour which brought him back to the Paramount in July. There they rushed three weeks to make two pictures in Hollywood, "Swing Parade of 1946" and Breakfast in Hollywood." In 'Swing Parade' Louie sings his new tune "Don't Worry 'Bout that Mule," written by his new pianist, Bill Davis. On the set, after acting and singing, the entire crew working on the picture broke out to applaud Jordan's talents.

Back To Broadway

From California to his annual Texas tour and then to New York for the Zanzibar opening. But those are just facts. On the side, Jordan recorded with Bing Crosby "My Baby Said Yes" and the combination "exploded the music industry". He gave special afternoon concerts for the teen agers at their Teen Age Clubs. As a result, he became their King of the Bobby Sox Brigade. His transcribed radio show "Here Comes Mr. Louis Jordan" is one of the first all-Negro transcribed radio shows ever to be presented on the airlanes. On each show, he has a guest star, a Decca recording artist such as Ella Fitzgerald, Mills Brothers, Delta Rhythm Boys, Ink Spots, etc.

One of the best thing Jordan did recently for Jordan fans was to give them "Caldonia", the Juke box favorite. It was followed by the film featurette based on the same name "Caldonia."

The picture itself is filled with accomplishments little package of the music and the maestro's unique treatment of in the background, Louis Jordan entertainment world usually ex- jive tunes, comedy and the love steps ahead to sandwich in even plodes as a stuff. Costing $30,000 to pro- bigger deeds before the New Year Five hits. duce, "Caldonia" is now touring is here again. And so it seems theatres over the country and is true that good things come in vying to exceed the popularity of small packages and the biggest the song hit. 9-21-45

Look Magazine

The saxophone is his first love. But he also dances, sings, plays clarinet.

10-2-45

He practiced three hours a day for 18 years—19,710 hours of hard work.

Chicago, Ill Look Mag

Louis Jordan

A new star is jumping in the musical firmament

10-2-45 Chgo

Led by the astute Louis Jordan, a small band known as the Tympany Five is making a large noise in current musical history. In just a year and a half—aided by *G. I. Jive*, a recording that sold over 250,000 copies—this jump outfit has bounced straight into the big time; last year its income was $200,000 plus.

Behind its success lie 18 years of labor by leader Jordan. Born in Arkansas, he got his start at 19 with a local Hot Springs group, hasn't been out of work since. His torrid saxophone led him to Philadelphia, New York, from one jump band to another. Finally, he felt himself smoothed and experienced enough to launch out on his own. Public response proves he was right.

But, "Music takes a lot out of you," says 37-year-old Louis. Next step: to retire at 40 to his Chicago home and, at ease, to "watch the other musicians play their heads off."

N.Y., N.Y.

P.M. 10-3-45

From New Orleans, where he helped develop jazz back in the 1890s, 66-year-old Bunk Johnson (right) has come to New York to play his famous trumpet at Stuyvesant Casino on the lower East Side. Bunk was discovered six years ago in the rice fields of Louisiana, forgotten by the music he helped start. Jazz enthusiasts contributed a trumpet and a new set of teeth for Bunk and started him on a comeback. With his band, Bunk plays for dancing at the Casino, Second Ave. at Ninth St., Tuesday through Friday evenings from 8:30 to 12:30, and Sunday afternoons from 2 to 5. He is shown here with Jim Robinson, trombonist in his seven-piece band. *Photo by Skippy Adelman, PM*

Meet Cootie Williams, The Guy The Tin Can Brought To Music

Chicago Defender Chi. Ill.

2-3-45

The tin can, popular today because of war time and OPA restrictions, was a most important item to one musician years ago. That musician is "Cottie" Williams, band leader and one of the greatest trumpeters on stage or screen today. It all happened back in Mobile, Ala., where Cootie was born Charles Melvin Williams back in 1908. The exact date? Cootie would like for someone to tell him since there is no birth certificate and, to quote Williams, most of the old folks who know have moved or passed on. But back to the tin can. Cootie was employed as delivery and scrub boy in a small tailor shop. In those days holes were punched in cans from which liquid soap was sprinkled over the garment. This was Cootie's job and as a result he became quite familiar with the old tin can.

One afternoon "Cootie," having punched holes in the side of an over-used can started blowing into it, and when odd noises came forth the practice became essential to his idleing the time away. The noise was essential and pleasant to Cootie only however for on several occasions he was chased from the establishment by his boss. And so Cootie found that the most healthy time for tooting his tin can was enroute home from work. This bit of amusemtnt he stuck to for a long time until finally the neighborhood became attracted to those strange musical noises. Neighbors, in a jovial mood used to say (while covering their faces from his view) "That young man will be a great musician someday." Always handy with the screw driver Cootie began experimenting with his tin can and in a short time had made an odd contraption from which came tunes instead of those odd noises. This was a signal to the lad's father to look into his musical ability Though the senior Williams has often said he was more interested in the mechanical side of Cootie's discovery than the music which came from it.

2-3-45

"I thought he'd be a builder of something sometimes," Mr. Williams has since said. However, one evening Cootie's dad returned from work with an over used trumpet which he gave his son with the request that this instrument replace the tin can. Cootie accepted the offer and began learning to toot the horn. He did not get very far on the instrument, however, as his first trip to school with it attracted only much laughter, Cootie decided he had better stick to his books. But there was a band in the school that needed a drummer so Cootie asked for the change to fill the vacancy. The professor agreed and Charles Melvin Williams became the band's regular drummer. But drumming wasn't Cootie Williams' first love. He had gotten a taste of wind music through a combination of his tin can and the aged trumpet his dad had given him and the two attempts at music had won him. So Cootie switched to the trumpet his last year with the band. He was 14 when he began his musical career in earnest.

2-3-45

Cottie Williams' professional career began in Florida where he went to join Eagle Eye Shields' band. This was in 1925 where he remained for more than two years. He left Shields and joined Alonzo Ross with whom he remained until the late Chick Webb snatched him for a brief stay. Cootie and Chick never saw eye to eye and the famous trumpeter left after three weeks, leaving to join Fletcher Henderson who headed the top orchestra of that period.

2-3-45

During his rise to the top Cootie has settled on Duke Ellington as his idol so when the chance came in 1929 joined up with the Jungle Rhythm king. By this time Cootie, due to the jumpy notes he had made on that leaky trumpet and tin can as a boy had perfected a sort of growl style that was to revolutionize the trumpet game. There had been others before him who had done a little of the growl trumpeting but not to the advantage that Cootie employed it. Leading trumpeters of that time were King Joe Olliver and others who made their trumpets talk and Louis Armstrong who reached for those high notes. Thus Cootie's style was different and fitted perfectly in the individual style of Duke Ellington. For eleven years Cootie was a part of Duke's great band that included Sonny Greer, Lawrence Brown, Johnnie Hodges, Freddy Guy, Rex Stewart, Tricky Sam Nanton, Harry Carney, Freddie Jenkins, and others. Then the nation awakened to learn that Cootie was joining Benny Goodman as featured trumpeter. Benny had just lost from his band, such fine Negro artists as Lionel Hampton, Fletcher Henderson, Teddy Wilson, and the late Chas. Christian and few expected that he planned to include another Negro. He signed Cootie however and for more than one year the famed growl trumpeter remained with the "King of Swing." Then late in 1941 Cootie informed Goodman that he was leaving to form his own band. His first engagement was booked already and brought him to the Grand Terrace cafe here in Chicago.

2-3-45

From the Terrace Cootie hit the road and ended the tour with a stay of several months at the Savoy ballroom in New York. He was and is under the management of Moe Gale, New York band manager. Following the Savoy engagement Cootie made a tour of the various theatres and dance halls of the country with the Four Ink Spots and Ella Fitzgerald setting all manner of records wherever the aggregation appeared. By that time the class of the Williams' band had been established. And when his recording of Cherry Red blues and "Things Ain't What They Used To Be," featuring vocals by Eddie Vinson, hit the juke boxes the ork became a sensation.

Cootie is also considered one of the nation's finest composers. Some of his more important compositions include "Echoes of Harlem" and "Concerto for Cootie."

2-3-45

As a soloist Cootie has few peers. His work in Benny Goodman's "Good Enough to Keep"; Metronone's "One O'Clock Jump"; Duke Ellington's "St. Louis Toodle-O," and Lionel Hampton's "Ring Dem Bells" stand out. Yes the tin can won Cootie for the music game then Cootie dropped his model. For there is nothing tin can about the music Cootie Williams plays today.

Chicago Defender Ill.

Few musicians can boast of as many honors as have been bestowed upon Cootie Williams since he hit the big top. Here he is shown receiving a cup from a magazine poll while Benny Goodman, left, looks on.

2-3-45

BASIE BREAKS LILY WHITE THEATRE DATE

Miami Whip Florida

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—(ANP)—Count Basie, the "Jump King of Swing," cancelled out of a week's booking at the Tower Theatre here the week of June 22 because of the theatre's policy which bars Negro patrons, and other Negro bands and acts will follow the Count's lead until the situation is remedied.

7-7-45

"I hate to pass up Kansas City because it is practically my hometown and the city where I got my start, but I can't play that theatre as long as they bar my own friends and my people from coming to see me," the Count declared in an exclusive statement released this week to the Associated Negro Press by his publicity man, Jim McCarthy.

The William Morris agency booked the Basie band for a week of one-niters in place of the Tower Theatre booking. Basie opens a four-week engagement at the Casa Manana in Culver City, Calif., on July 3.

Sissle Heads USO Show Off to Italy

ANP- Latest news Sept. 1942

NEW YORK (ANP) — Noble Sissle, famous bandleader, left here last week for Italy with USO camp show's modernized version of "Shuffle Along," accompanied by Flournoy Miller, well known showman.

Before he left, Sissle revealed he had made a special request to be sent where the 92nd division is stationed. "I warned in my article addressed to colored soldiers at the beginning of the war that theirs would be a nasty job," he said.

7-21-45

"I feel that if we can get to entertain them and love them for the great job of their commanders said they have done, then they may come home with happier hearts, after their gallant fight was followed by such a disgraceful un-American smear campaign."

Sissle Off to Europe With 'Shuffle Along'

Defender

Noble Sissle, famous band leader, left here last week for Italy with USO camp show's modernized version of *Shuffle Along*.

N.Y., N.Y.

Before he left, Sissle revealed he had made a special request to be sent where the 92nd Division was stationed.

7-21-45

"I warned in my article addressed to Negro soldiers at the beginning of the war that theirs would be a nasty job," he said. "And I feel that if we can get to entertain them and let them know we are proud of them, and love them for the great job their commanders have said they have done, then they may come home with happier hearts after their gallant fight was followed by such a disgraceful un-American smear campaign."—(ANP).

Fort Lewis Swing Outfit Rated One Of Hottest Bands In Khaki

FORT LEWIS, Wash.—One of the hottest GI swing outfits to be found anywhere is the 29th Special Service Band stationed at Fort Lewis. Led by Ernie Harper, former Pittsburgher, the orchestra has created a minor sensation up and down the West Coast and has been lauded by movie stars and servicemen alike. The band has appeared at the Hollywood Canteen and toured with the Hollywood Cavalcade. Later they played a big part in an all-GI show, "Sons O' Bridges," which raised $11,000,000 in war bonds.

This record so impressed the brasshats that they gave the members of the band furloughs and extended their stay in the United States.

Although the band is not an authorized unit of the Army, it is rapidly being acclaimed one of the hottest in the country. Big name maestros who have heard the band say it is terrific. The men were former members of crews led by Lionel Hampton, Tiny Bradshaw, Les Hite, Fletcher Henderson, Nat Towles, Louis Jordan and others.

The band's line-up includes Joe Thomas, Payton Hairston, Wendell Jackson, Wendell Turner, William Williams and Adrian Loftis, saxophones; Robert West, Louis Jones, Elmer Taylor and Ronald Branch, trumpets; Wyatt Ruther, Samuel McIver, George Wilson and Murville Abels, trombone; Bernard Hipkins and Christopher Tull, drums; Charles Oden, bass; and Ernie Harper and Donald Hill, piano.

One of the most popular numbers the band plays is "Jody, Jody," composed by Ernie Harper. The number has been recorded by the band. If everything goes all right, the boys will stay together and when the war is over they will break out with one of the hottest post-war bands in the land.

Eckstine, the Sepia Sinatra, to Be At National

Billy Eckstine . . . he wrote "Jelly Blues."

BILLY ECKSTINE, described in the advance billing as "The Sepia Sinatra," will bring himself, his orchestra and several Negro entertainers into the National to present the stage show beginning Friday.

Among the entertainers in the organization presenting what Eckstine calls "Sepia Rambles" are Conway and Parks, "The Darktown Clowns;" Holmes and Jean, presented at the National last season with Cab Calloway, who will present eccentric singing and dancing, and Slim Thomas, styled "A Comedy In Black."

Eckstine is the composer of "Jelly, Jelly Blues," "I Stay In the Mood for You," "Good Jelly Blues," "The Real Thing Happened to Me," "I Want to Talk About You" and other hits. Right at the moment Billy and his orchestra are considered the sensation of the band world, for it is the only successful band created during the war and it has smashed box office records from coast to coast.

"The Phantom of 42d Street" will be the accompanying film attraction, with a cast headed by Dave O'Brien and Kay Aldridge and including Alan Mowbray and Frank Jenks.

Ellington: Duke Established As Jazz Kingpin

By DON De LEIGHBOR

NEW YORK CITY — Let's talk about the real Duke Ellinton, the about the great Duke Ellington, the

THE DUKE

on top of the musical heap, consistently creating new tunes and setting new records for the past 22 years. The King . . . he has ruled undisputed in his field . . . unless one wants to be charitable and say that Paul Whiteman should be permitted to share the throne, but at Duke's left, and slightly to the rear on a lower level.

Not that Paul isn't a durable maestro, but the obese orchestra leader surely has not produced the lilting and infectious numbers that have oozed from the nimble brain of Duke Ellington, only to become a part of our world is musical tradition . . . almost legendary.

GOES ON FOREVER

Not even excepting Whiteman, Ellington is the one big time baton wielder who has maintained his prestige without a break ever since he hit the crest. In the meantime, other musicians have come and gone.

The Duke rejected an art scholarship at Pratt Institute in order to play the piano with small bands in and around Washington. Soon he felt he was ready for the big show, and in 1923, in company with five other musicians, he "invaded" New York, and the rest is history.

The Duke, it must ever be borne in mind, has not held his secure place in the "kingdom of swing" by mere accident or by some freak of circumstances. Woven into all his music is a rare but happy combination of folk and serious influences, the development of which has been astonishing.

The wedding of these influences by Ellington to produce his music, found him performing at his creative best, and in so doing he has managed to capture the feeling and imagination of millions which, perhaps, explains why his works are always exciting, and why they are imperishable.

To the great Duke must go much of the credit or transforming ordinary jazz, earlier called ragtime music, into "symphonic jazz" and then lifting it out of the dance hall and transplanting it, first into the theatre and later into some of the most famous concert halls of the world.

After his first Cotton Club engagement, the Duke was featured by the late Florenz Ziegfield, of Follies fame, in the musical "Show Girl" in which Ellington presented for the first time the late George Gershin's "Concerto in F" as a ballet with Harriet Hector as the ballerina.

TOURS EUROPE

Then with the popular French singer and actor, Maurice Chevalier, the Duke went again on Broadway. Following that, he took his orchestra on a cross-country tour which was climaxed at the old Palace in New York.

Then came Hollywood and several films, including "Belle of the '90s" with the buxon Mae West, and "Cabin in the Sky." Additional glory came after a highly successful European tour in 1933. A second tour of the continent in 1939 just before the war began was a solid triumph and the Duke's star truly became a diamond in the theatrical sky.

Ellington tunes became the most whistled and hummed of those of any contemporary composer. "Mood Indigo," "Sophisticated Lady," "Creole Rhapsody," "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good," "Caravan," "Solitude," "Take The 'A' Train," "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart," "Black and Tan Fantasy," "Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me," "Don't You Know I Care," "I Didn't Know About You," "I'm Beginning to See the Light," and the "St. Louis Toodle-oo," are some of the great numbers, many of which will live forever.

TO CARNEGIE HALL

On the Pacific Coast in 1942, the Duke wrote and appeared in the hit revue, "Jump For Joy." He was back in New York in January 1943 for his 20th anniversary which was observed in Carnegie Hall, sacred to the world's famous concert artists for generations.

Since that original Carnegie Hall debut, the Duke has been back twice. Other concerts by the versatile Duke has been performed at such renowned places as the Philharmonic Hall in San Francisco and the Civic Opera House in Chicago.

The New York Board of Education of New York announced last week that Duke Ellington will award three instrumental scholarships at the Juillard Institute of Musical Art to worthy high school students regardless of race, creed or color. This is believed to be the first time a Negro has made a scholorship available for all Americans. Good going, Duke.

How Cootie Williams got his band

WHEN COOTIE WILLIAMS—recently and at long last—was booked into the Paramount, we made it a point to catch the show and to talk to him. For we knew that Cootie was one of the greatest of jazz trumpet players, and that he had dreamed for years of putting together a top-notch swing band, and that this booking signified success.

Cootie did very little playing during his band's time on the stage, though the spotlight was focussed on him almost constantly. He would sway to the music, grimace in fake ecstasy and wave his hands frantically, like a Holy Roller.

Cootie is big, and built like a wrestler. With his thick neck and barrel chest, he looks a little incongruous leading a band. The effect was almost a burlesque of a jive-mad hipster.

After the show

When the spotlight swung away from Cootie and we strained our eyes to see him in the semi-darkness, his face looked tired, almost pained. He leaned against the piano for support. And when the show ended and the stage lights went out, we could see Cootie's big body sag as he hobbled offstage.

We wandered backstage, then, and found Cootie slumped in an easy chair. His collar was open and it was smeared with the makeup that was running off his face. His valet, a youth of about 19, was pulling Cootie's pants off and Cootie was softly saying through his teeth, "Easy now, *easy!*" Then, as the pants slipped from his legs, we saw that Cootie's right knee was tightly bandaged.

Cootie, putting on a lounging robe, explained that on his second day at the Paramount he had given an exuberant down beat and had thrown the knee out of joint.

"Then what did you do?"

Cootie shrugged wearily. "I leaned over and pushed it back in place and finished the show," he said. Smiling a little he added, "Then I fainted in the wings."

While Cootie talked, we studied him, especially his lips, for a trumpet player's lips must be as sensitive as a Jimmy Valentine's sandpapered fingers. The trumpet's tone depends chiefly on how fluid and expressive the player's lips are while moulding the tone.

Cootie's lips are muscular looking and have three callouses thicker than those on a dock walloper's hands. The callouses are in triangular formation—one in the middle of his big, flattened upper lip, the others on the lower lip. They were formed by Nature to cushion the sensitive lips against the metal mouthpiece of the trumpet. He has cultivated a neat little mustache to safeguard his lip against the chance of cutting it while shaving.

We asked if he liked hopping around and rolling his eyes and conforming to the stage caricature of a Negro jazz musician.

"That," he said, "is showmanship. I'll have to do that as long as I front a band."

We suggested that he was a good enough musician to get by on his playing, but he shook his head.

"I can go out and hit a note that nobody else can, but who's going to know it? When I started the band I didn't use any showmanship at all. We had a very tough time. And, Mister, I was playing a lot of horn!"

Boyhood in Alabama

Cootie regards himself as a business man rather than an artist. "I want to get out of the music business while I'm still young," he said. "I'm going to get me a couple of apartment houses and live off that."

He paused as if uncertain whether or not (to say more and then burst out with, "All musicians—colored or white—live today and damn tomorrow. They live their money and when they die people have to take up a collection for their widow." His manner said unmistakably that never would happen to Cootie Williams.

Cootie was born in 1909 in Mobile, Ala., and was christened Charles Melvin Williams. He was called *Cootie* because as a baby that was what he said instead of *Goo*.

His father ran a gambling house so, unlike most Negro kids in Alabama, Cootie was fairly well off. When he was five he started going to music classes. He learned to play several instruments but it was not until he was 12 that he tried a trumpet.

He played the *Twelfth Street Rag* and his teacher was so impressed he insisted that Cootie concentrate on trumpet. Cootie says he refused, and at that the teacher beat him. One of Cootie's older brothers heard his screams and came in to rescue him, but the teacher licked Cootie's brother—and so Cootie studied the trumpet.

By the time he was 14, Cootie was sitting in with bands that played in Mobile. When he was 16—that was in 1925—he went to work in a band led by one Eagle-eye Shields.

How he started

Three years later, in 1928, Cootie came to New York with a band, but it soon broke up.

Cootie decided to stay in New York and show the town what he could do. As the place to make his debut, he picked a musicians' hangout in Harlem called The Bandbox.

"It was on 135th Street," he said, leaning forward and moving his injured leg to a more comfortable position with both hands. "All the great musicians used to hang out there—Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Bix Beiderbecke. They used to come up after hours and have jam sessions."

He settled back in his chair, and with an out-of-focus gaze, looked at a point over our head.

"Every night," he went on, "the men who played one particular instrument would have a cutting contest." (When musicians try to outdo each other, or cut each other up.)

"I went up there the night of the trumpets," Cootie continued. "I was just a kid up from the South and nobody knew me, but I got up and blew everybody out of the joint." He grinned.

That bit of bravado got Cootie a job with Fletcher Henderson's band.

Soon afterward, Cootie went up to the Savoy ballroom to dance and he took a liking to one of the hostesses. They've been married 16 years now.

Cootie stayed with Henderson a year, then worked with Duke Ellington for 12 years. In 1940, he joined Benny Goodman, for a $100-a-week pay jump.

Cootie always had had the band-leading bug, and after a year with Goodman, he decided the time was ripe.

He knew Goodman had backed Harry James, so he asked Goodman to back him.

"Cootie," Goodman told him, "I think you should come up the hard way. If I should do something for you, you'll never know what life is, and what having your own band is." Cootie smiled faintly.

When Goodman turned him down, Cootie tried Duke Ellington. Ellington was enthusiastic, but said he didn't have any money to invest.

So Cootie decided to use his life savings. "I figured it would be good business to own the band myself," he told us, and, though his wife objected, Cootie left the Goodman band and started to look for musicians.

He was telling us that, on a tip from Count Basie, he had gone to Houston, Tex., and signed some members of a band down there, when there was a knock on the dressing room door. A voice shouted. "Half an hour!"

Cootie twisted to look at his make-up in the mirror in the manner of a man trying to decide if he needed to shave. He picked up a make-up sponge and gave his face a few dabs.

"Some of the boys," he went on, "weren't too anxious to go in with me, but I told them, 'Benny is behind me!'"

"But he wasn't," we remarked.

"No, certainly not," Cootie agreed.

Toward the end of 1941, Cootie had got together what he thought was a good band and they started rehearsing at the Renaissance Ballroom in Harlem. Cootie had been forced to go out of town for most of his musicians and now the men needed money for apartments and to buy new wardrobes. They would draw on Cootie for that, much to his wife's disgust.

Money trouble

The band had a tough time catching on. Cootie had used up all his money and the band was not earning enough to meet the pay roll.

"I would tell the fellows, 'Don't worry about a thing. Benny is behind me. He's going to take care of us. Next month we are going to follow him into the Hotel New Yorker.'"

Cootie laughed unrestrainedly. His laugh was pitched high for a man with such a deep chest. "We had as much chance of playing the New Yorker as you have," he went on. "They don't ever book a Negro band. Other times I would tell the fellows we were going to California. This went on for two years. The fellows would believe me because they knew that I was a big musician."

He took off his dressing gown now, and his valet handed him his pants. "That's how I kept the fellows together," he said, "by lying to them.

"The same with my wife," he said, pulling his pants back on gingerly. "I lied to her, too, just like the rest. She doesn't care about nothing but money. I mean in the line of business," he hastened to add. "She would be after me, saying," and Cootie raised his voice to a querulous falsetto, "'With all that money you've spent we could have bought a home! When are you going to start making money?' I'd tell her, 'Money? You've got to invest money before you can make it.'"

He called to his valet for a tie. "Once we got $400 for playing the Breakstone Ballroom, in Detroit. The driver of our chartered bus said I owed him $1000."

Cootie gaily drew himself up in a king-of-the-beggars manner. "I told him, 'You insult me! You don't want to carry me any further? Then we are *through!*'

"I put the fellows on a Greyhound bus so that we could come to New York and open at the Apollo Theater, in Harlem. I told the fellows that the bus company didn't want to carry a big musician like me and I had them so fussed that they wanted to kill that driver."

He laughed and then said grimly "and that's why I got a band today."

As we were talking, a young, broad-shouldered man wearing dark glasses came in. He and Cootie exchanged nods, and the young man sat down, listening.

We asked Cootie if he had ever been tempted to give the whole thing up. "Oh yeah, many times," he said. "Once, last year, when Benny was playing the Paramount, he sent me a wire offering me four-fifty a week. My wife opened it. She grabbed me and brought me down here. She said she can't wait five years and that this is the end of the band now. I half wanted to go back to Benny, but I decided to stick it out."

One recording helped

Cootie began to laugh again. "My wife wouldn't speak to me for three days. I would have dinner and she would sit there and not eat with me."

Then, Cootie told us, just a year ago the band's popularity and profits started going up. Cootie attributed that to two things. First, he switched the management of his band to Moe Gale, who specializes in Negro talent.

Explaining the importance of the change,

Cootie Williams (left), one of the great jazz trumpet players, photographed in his dressing room at the Paramount a few days after he had hurt his knee by giving "an exuberant downbeat." With him is his bandboy, Tommy Thompson.

Cootie said, "For one thing, Moe has a place for us to work in, since he owns the Savoy ballroom in Harlem. And that's important. That public at the Savoy," he said, "they know! If they really like a band, you know it's going places."

The other reason for his band's rise, Cootie thinks, is a record he made, called *Cherry Red Blues*. "It wasn't very popular with the white people," Cootie said, "But it stayed on *Billboard's* Harlem Hit Parade for 36 weeks." 7-8-45

There was another sharp rap at the door. The youth in the dark glasses looked at Cootie and said, "That's the five minutes." "I know," Cootie said. The valet handed Cootie a crutch and the newcomer helped Cootie struggle to his feet. Then the valet handed Cootie his trumpet, and the big jazz player hobbled out.

Dud and Paul Hit Jackpot:

Brother Band Makes Grade As Bascombs Win Plaudits

People's Voice

Show business has boasted a number of sister teams and an occasional brother and sister act but now there is appearing over the horizon a brother band act of all things but, the unusual part of it all is that the new combination—the Bascamb Brothers—seem to have gotten over the big hump

DUD BASCOMB

PAUL BASCOMB

7-27-45

and are on their way to the higher salaried brackets.

Naturally the folks in the entertainment world are watching closely the development of this family experiment as they watch closely all new things.

One thing that the Bascombs—Paul, the saxist and Dud, the cornetist—have in their favor is that they aren't any Johnny-come-latelys to the music game, they know their way around all right.

Both boys hit New York in the summer of 1934 as members of another nervy little aggregation just beginning to feel its oats and making a determined bid for recognition here in the big town. That would be Erskine Hawkins' 'Bama State Collegians, fresh off the campus of State College at Montgomery, Alabama.

It wasn't too long before the band did catch on and go on to resounding success. A large part of their upward spiral was traceable to the brilliant work of the two frères Bascomb. They came to the inevitable conclusion that if they could perform so masterfully for someone else, why not for themselves? Thus the idea was born simultaneously in the heads of the two boys. Late in 1944, with the good wishes of Hawkins and the men in the band, they made the plunge.

It turned out that the world wasn't eagerly awaiting the appearance of the Bascombs on the musical scene so they had more than their share of trying days and to make bad matters worse, along came the curfew. Came an engagement at the Downbeat club on 52nd street and they began to see the light as the better informed jazz critics nodded their approval of the new young aggregation. A booking in Cleveland and then they passed the supreme test—a week in the Apollo—with colors flying. July 19th they go into the Savoy which means national audiences via the network broadcasts. 7-7-45

So it looks like the Bascomb boys are really on their way!

News Review - 9-11-45

PHIL MOORE, composer of *Shoo Shoo Baby*, who leads his new jazz unit, the Phil Moore Four, nightly in the Cabana Room of the Copacabana.

88b-1945

Porgy and Bess

"Porgy And Bess" Performers Entertain For GI's On Ship

Philadelphia Tribune Pg.

By CHARLES H. LOEB,
U. S. War Correspondent

1-20-45

(Representing the Philadelphia Tribune and Negro Newspaper Publishers Association)

(Copyright—Reproduction prohibited)

DUTCH NEW GUINEA—(By Courier)—When this story reaches your favorite newspaper your correspondent will have traveled nearly half-way around the world from Cleveland, Ohio, by commercial airlines, train and U. S. Army transport to within a stone's throw of the fiercest fighting of the Pacific campaign to give you a "close up" picture of what is happening to the husband, relative or loved one you kissed goodbye months ago.

Those of you who are snowbound back in the States will probably envy me when I tell you that it is now the middle of summer in these parts, but your GI needs no thermometer to tell it's "hot as hell," since we're but a few degrees off the Equator.

High spot of the trip over from San Francisco on a former Matson Line luxury liner, converted to troop carriers, was the presence aboard of a seventeen-member troupe of USO performers, the all-Negro cast of "Porgy and Bess" streamlined for presentation to service men in this theatre.

1-20-45

This magnificant group of performers, under the management of Thomas Mosley, veteran New York performer, was not only acclaimed the finest of the nine units aboard, but endeared itself to every GI abroad through its willingness to perform any time, in any section of the ship, by request. Indeed, at odd intervals, it was not uncommon to see individual members of the company surrounded by amusement-hungry GIs in cramped quarters below decks singing encore after encore of Gershwin melodies and Negro spirituals.

1-20-45

On board was a small contingent of colored infantry replacements, less than 100 men, most of them from Camp Breckenridge, Ky., under the watchful eye of First Sergeant John O. Herring, Garland, N. C.

When members of the "Porgy and Bess" Company learned that half of these men had missed one of their scheduled performances, the entire troupe went below decks and performed its entire show for them. Later they gave a special performance for members of the ships crew who were so pleased that they dispatched a delegation of three members to the Transport Chaplain's office to express their thanks. Crew members told me that it was the first time that a USO unit had been thoughtful enough to perform for them.

Until the unit left the transport at a port of call off the Australian coast, leaving me in lonliness and isolation, little tidbits from the galley flowed up to their cabins in an amost continuous stream. Since I shared cabins with the male members of the cast, I was also "in."

1-20-45

Members of the cast, all New Yorkers (at least by adoption) included Thomas Moseley, manager; David N. Davies, stage manager; John E. Garth, III, as "Porgy," Francis Brock, as "Bess," William Veasey, George Marshall, Robert Woodland, Josiah Albrigfht, Solomon Bryson, Bobby Johnson, Audrey Vanderpool, Eloise Uggums, Gladys Goode, Catherine Van Buren, Carmine Brown, Elizabeth Scott and Julia Latimer, director and accordianist.

After seeing Francis Brock, who suffered terribly from seasickness, drag her slight from up to "B" deck, fight back nausea long enough to give a thrilling rendition of "Bess You Is My Woman Now," and captivate a breathless audience with "Memories of You" before collapsing, I'll make short shift of any civilian wisecracker who dares call the gallant USO performers "synthetic soldiers."

Pearl Primus Tells Her Faith In Common People

Chicago Defender Chicago, Ill. 1-6-45

By EARL CONRAD
(Author of "Harriet Tubman")

NEW YORK—We had heard that Pearl Primus (pronounced Preemus), the sensational young Negro dancer who has mushroomed in the recent period, was a girl with strong social convictions.

Curious to get confirmation of this, if true, and anxious to meet a dancer and thinker all in one, we set out for the New Dance Group where she and her troupe of fellow dancers were preparing for a Belasco theatre opening.

It was dress rehearsal time when we arrived, and Pearl Primus was in something of a dither. She explained she had to get into a cab and rush around the town a bit, and if we wanted to go along, and conduct our interview while in motion, welcome.

We waited while the 24-year-old, short, solidly-built dancer with the ebony coloring changed from her dancing togs into street clothes.

Soon we were going down an elevator, carrying two grips, and Miss Primus loaded down with an armful of dancing gowns and a big bundle of water flowers.

Speaks of Africa

"Listen," said the white cabbie, when he heard there were many stops to be made, "I can't take that trip. I got a livin' to make." The promise of a substantial tip swung things to our side.

It was hard to concentrate on what she was saying, for awhile, because of her own dazzling but simple presence and owing to the sound of traffic. Her jet complexion was illumined by large gold earrings, by a wristful of bracelets done in African design. Yet she was wearing a simple red coat, and a plain dress.

"When I speak of Africa, when I dance of Africa," she explained, "I try to get across what it means to me, which is something that it does not mean to others. Africa is not the arid place of jungle, animals and wildness which some conceive it to be; nor is it the idyllic place that others have portrayed it.

"I see Africa as the continent of strength; it is a place with ancient and powerful civilizations, civilizations wrecked and destroyed by the slave-seekers. I know an Africa that gave the world the iron on which now it moves, an Africa of nations, dynasties, cultures, languages, great migrations, powerful movements, slavery, competition, communism—all that makes life itself. This strength, this past, I try to get into my dances."

PEARL PRIMUS

Need For Knowledge

Then, as an afterthought, as a kind of solemn reflection, she added:

"Our own people do not know of this great tradition. They too need light as unhappy, sick and sometimes vicious white America needs such light."

The talk got lighter for a minute. She had studied medicine at Hunter college, she informed. She hadn't danced at all prior to three years ago, had even been a wallflower at socials before then. "Why, I used to want to dance, but the fellows would only talk to me, wouldn't ask me to dance." She'd been many other things too, knew from personal experience the meaning of **"Hard Time Blues."** She's worked, made her own way, belonged to unions. She's had her manual labor and her white collar work, her period on NYA.

"And when I think of my people here in America too, I see something that they have to see clearer, that whites have to know about. I see the long road we have trod, the movements for freedom we have been in, from the slave revolts that dot our early history, up to our participation in the Revolutionary War. I know my people fought with Andrew Jackson in 1812, and they gave America such a great adviser to Lincoln as Frederick Douglass, and marched down 'Freedom's Road' in the Reconstruction period.

Signs of Progress

"My people have been on the march since then too, migrating to the North, fighting the Pharoah in the South for the past two generations, and now they are somewhat coming into their own. I see the signs of progress and I have the hope and I dance the hope."

Then she mentioned how, when she wrote to soldiers she knew, she told them of the things that were going on, on the home front, of the hopeful things and the dangerous things, the things they would have to fight when they came back and the things she and others are fighting here and now. It developed that she has a very large correspondence, one she actively keeps up, with nearly a hundred boys in the forces. They count on her letters. Negro and white write to her, ask her their questions; and she answers.

Arrived at a Village destination, Miss Primus entered a brownstone front house, carried her gowns and flowers inside, left us to talk with the cabby who immediately vented his spleen:

"Of course she's educated. She's different. But you can't trust 'em. You can't trust any of 'em, I say."

And he went on that way, but he was old, wearied, confirmed in his prejudices, and perhaps 13,000,000 people like Pearl Primus wouldn't have changed his views any more than listening to one Primus had altered him.

Close to the People

Soon we were headed toward the Belasco where the rehearsal was scheduled and the vital black girl spoke on of her dream . . .

"For me, the progressive," she said. "Give me the man or woman who wants and sees something better and is willing to proclaim that desire and fight for it. I like the people. I like to be close to them. I am of them, I shall always be simply one of them. I want to know the next man's problem, share the problem and the solution."

It was all like a dancing poem to listen to her, and a little overwhelming in a Walt Whitmanish way. And then we had arrived and were in Miss Primus' dressing room, the one once occupied by Lenore Ulric.

PEARL PRIMUS—

Throughout the evening as Miss Primus rehearsed the numbers, as her musicians played and her dancers whirled, she alternated her rehearsal with snatches of interview. Once she approached us, dancing up to us, it seemed, dressed in a tight sweater that showed sharply her firm chest, and gym pants that fitted tightly over her strengthy hips. As she approached there was an overhanging rope which she casually jumped up to touch. The leap seemed tremendous to all who watched it, yet she had done it with the blithness of one who, walking in the street, simply touches a fire hydrant.

What She's For

Then the long hours of a rehearsal that went on until early in the morning, with Miss Primus seated out in the orchestra shouting directives to her dancers. Iike this: "Now if you fellows don't straighten this one out, I'll throw it out of the program." And they straightened it out.

"Frank, get your legs out farther; Tom, not that way with your hands." Then she ran forward, leaped to the stage, showed Tom how. Then a set-to with Josh White, telling him how it ought to be done—something that few people can get away with.

We found out during the evening some of the things she was for: for the Political Action committee, for a great, strong Soviet Union in the post-war period; for jobs for everybody here at home; for an end to Jim Crow; for a Fair Employment Practice Act nationally; for the integration of Negro and white in more and more phases of Negro life; for the arts; for the dance; for the people; for America.

"Tell them," she said, "our spring will come."

Pearl Primus Dancers' Feet Infected

New York Amsterdam News 2-10-45

Declares Tour's 'Grossly Mishandled'

N.Y. Amsterdam News

Production Drags; Dancer Plans Suit

2-10-45

by Vickie Thompson

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — In a special interview with this correspondent, Pearl Primus, noted dancer, revealed that her tour sponsored by Max Jelin was "grossly mishandled" and "inefficiently run." At the New Jersey booking some of the dancers received infections during the barefoot dances because the stage was improperly prepared. At the New Haven concert she also accused Jelin of refusing to pay the cast, which is a violation of union rules, which do not permit performers to go on stage unless they are paid in advance.

2-10-45

Finally Paid Off

After delaying the curtain some time he finally paid the cast, but up to press time, Miss Primus had not been paid for 3 weeks.

Miss Primus says that when Jelin first saw her performance as a soloist, he saw her in a way to make money, so naturally she figured he would present her to the best advantage — with an adequately trained cast, best lighting, etc. But "this" she said scornfully, alluding to the performance just given at the New Haven Shubert. "The music was offbeat, the 'spots' didn't come on at the right moment." Oh, I'm sizzling. Also my lawyer tells me I shouldn't have trusted Jelin in the first place. He offered me a price and I accepted. Nothing in black and white — just a gentleman's agreement. But he's no gentleman. Last week my salary check bounced," she concluded.

Production Not Smooth

The production was not as smooth as it should have been, even in the eyes of this layman. But this was due to no deficiency on the part of Miss Primus. No artist can give her best without cooperation from the cast, stage crew and musicans. It is not in keeping with the artistic temperament, to have to worry about the details of production — i. e., salaries, proper lighting and mood music.

Judging from her magnificant body, one would assume that Pearl Primus has been dancing from the cradle, but such is not the case. She was studying pre-med and physical education at Hunter College in New York when the urge to dance became dominant over all other interests.

The intensity of her feelings about discrimination, fascism (which she insists still exist in America today) can be noted in her dances of protest. She feels about dancing as great poets feel when they must put their thoughts into words. Dancing is the medium Miss Primus uses. Feeling that her first duty is to "our boys," she has danced 1000 hours in USO camp shows. She has one USO pin and another in the offing. The present pin is worn by her travelling companion, Mrs. Leonore Moore, wife of Buddy Moore.

Interested In Slavery

Pearl Primus is very interested in the period of slavery. Last summer, on her vacation, she decided to travel South. On arriving in Charlestown, the leading citizens took her for a tour of the town. With pride, they showed her the old slave markets and other slave landmarks.

"What a sad commentary on our people," remarked Pearl, "that such things are a matter of pride. They should be torn down with the bare hands. Not permitted to stand as an eternal reminder of our shame."

From this Southern trip evolved her dance, "Steal Away To Freedom." Although it didn't jell in this concert, her idea is to have two muscular boys to represent the entire slave colony. Offstage a voice says, "I bought two today." Then pantomime depicting the awakening of the slaves, restless, seeking freedom. Offstage voice, again, "I wonder if they think." What a superb production that could be if properly staged.

2-10-45

Future Plan

Miss Primus plans on giving the present cast more basic technique in dancing. "A properly trained dancer must know at all times on the stage, where each part of the body is to be placed." She hopes the audiences of the tour will not judge her by the few concerts given under the mismanagement of Max Jelin, and will try to realize that she is a dancer — not a producer. She will try to be responsible for her cast in the future.

88b-1945
Sat. Review of Literature
(New York City)
OCT 6 - 1945

Seeing Things

TOPSY

NO doubt the Greeks miscounted. Nine Muses? No. Surely there were only eight. Clio must have been Thalia's nickname. Either this, or the Comic Muse and History's Custodian were one and the same, and that body housed the first schizophrenic.

Otherwise comedy would be one thing, history another, and those responsible for each of them would keep them apart. Men's sense of the absurd would be fully developed; their memories longer than they are. History, when made, would remain as serious as was the making of it. It would not elect to toboggan so disconcertingly as it now does from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Its muse would refuse to hide behind a laughing mask. Instead of proving giddy, giggling, and irreverent, she would not mock men's lack of humor by demonstrating the savage strength of her own. Nor would she dart away from the sobriety of great events to steal into an amusement park and ride upon the loop-the-loop.

* * *

Five years ago I thought I had caught history completing as neat and foolish a circle on this loop-the-loop as was possible for her to do. It was when in a Boston paper, my startled eyes encountered a squib announcing that the Daughters of the American Revolution would celebrate the Fourth of July in Boston (of all places) by holding a tea party (of all things) for Bundles for Britain (of all causes).

Of recent weeks history seems to have been outdoing herself on this self-same loop-the-loop. There is the news from Europe, for example. I mean the reports that General Eisenhower has had to insist that American soldiers, who only a few months back were fighting German men, cannot now marry German girls. To the ironically minded, the need for such an order is bound to seem both humorous and sad.

Even more unexpected was a news item from the Pacific. It announced quite calmly, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, that an American GI baseball team would tour Japan by air next month, meeting various Japanese clubs. "Admission fees, if any," it added, again without so much as the suggestion of a gasp of astonishment, "will be turned over to war sufferers in Japan."

As if this were not enough, last week came the announcement that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" had been barred, not in Scottsboro or in any Southern town, but in Harriet Beecher Stowe's own Connecticut—first in Bridgeport, then in New Haven. Why? According to a headline in the *Herald Tribune*, which best summarized the situation's irony, because the play was "anti-Negro."

For me, at least, a certain irony lurked in the mere fact that I first read the story in the *Herald Tribune*. I could not help remembering what a writer for the *Herald* had said about "Uncle Tom's Cabin" when it was performed in New York ninety-three years ago. The version was not the famous George L. Aiken one which was to make "Tom" show history; it was C. W. Taylor's adaptation. The version, however, in this case does not matter; the writer's reactions do. The gentleman from the *Herald* was as horrified as the piece he wrote horrifies us today. Had he been Simon Legree, he could not have hated the play more. He described it as a "firebrand of the most dangerous character to the peace of the whole country."

> The institution of Southern slavery [he wrote] is recognized and protected by the federal constitution, upon which this Union was established, and which holds it together. But for the compromises on the slavery question, we should have no constitution and no Union—and would, perhaps, have been at this day, in the condition of the South American republics, divided into several military despotisms, constantly warring with each other, and each within itself. The Fugitive Slave law only carries out one of the plain provisions of the constitution. When a Southern slave escapes to us, we are in honor bound to return him to his master.
>
> And yet, here in this city—which owes its wealth, population, power, and prosperity, to the Union and the constitution, and this same institution of slavery, to a greater degree than any other city in the Union—here we have nightly represented, at a popular theatre, the most exaggerated enormities of Southern slavery, playing directly into the hands of the abolitionists and abolition kidnappers of slaves, and doing their work for them. What will our Southern friends think of all our professions of respect for their delicate social institution of slavery, when they find that even our amusements are overdrawn caricatures exhibiting our hatred against it and against them? Is this consistent with good faith, or honor, or the every day obligations of hospitality? No, it is not. It is a sad blunder; for when our stage shall become the deliberate agent in the cause of abolitionism, with the sanction of the public, and their approbation, the peace and harmony of this Union will soon be ended.

The anger and alarm felt by the *Herald's* writer were, of course, the perfect tribute to the power possessed by "Uncle Tom's Cabin." No book championing the Negro's cause has equalled it in the effects it produced. It used both the theatre and the novel "as a weapon," long before the Communists were to start talking about the stage in these terms. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was the atomic bomb of its day. When it exploded, slavery was obsolete. It opened more eyes and touched more hearts than any corrective work yet written on the subject.

One would have thought that, if any book merited the gratitude of those interested in racial equality, Mrs. Stowe's classic would have been that volume. It may not have been *the* cause of the Civil War, as Lincoln once said it was. But it was *one* of its major causes, since it blocked the Fugitive Slave Law.

Whatever her defects as a novelist may have been, Mrs. Stowe was as fierce an enemy of slavery as the globe has known. The publication of her book was a world event. Van Wyck Brooks suggests the drama of its impact when he tells us that it appeared in thirty-seven languages. That three Paris newspapers published it at once. That Macaulay, Heine, and George Sand reviewed it. That Uncle Tom's Cabins rose all over Europe as restaurants, creameries, and bazaars. That it sent Heine back to his Bible. That in far-off Russia it made such an impression on Tolstoy that, when he came to write "What Is Art?," he took it as an example of the highest type, with Dostoievsky's "House of the Dead," and much of Victor Hugo. "In all the history of the printed book," says Mr. Brooks, "the Bible alone had appeared in so many versions." Certainly no play ha ever toured so constantly or been seen by so many millions. For years the sun never set on it.

No wonder it is surprising to have had Bridgeport and New Haven ban a new musical version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." In Bridgeport the ban, since lifted, was the result of protests sent by CIO Negro groups, the Bridgeport Pastors' Association, and the Communist Party. The resolution unanimously adopted in support of interracial unity by the executive board of the Bridgeport Industrial Union Council finds history looping-the-loop ridiculously.

It objects to "Uncle Tom's Cabin" because it claims the play "refreshed memories that tend to portray only the weaknesses of a racial minority, and holds up to ridicule peoples who in the early days of our country were unfortunately subjected to exposures that today would be considered atrocious."

However well-meant such a protest may be, it does seem to be both misinformed and ill-advised. Certainly the Negro is not what he was when Mrs. Stowe wrote. Mrs. Stowe is one of those who must be thanked because he is not. Even in her work, it is the white man rather than the Negro who is the villain.

History cannot be changed by passing resolutions. There is something at once sinister and silly in trying to deny what has been. Slavery, however hideous, was an historic fact. The point of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," no less than the truth of slavery itself, is that it is the slave owner rather than the slave who had reason to be ashamed.

Booker T. Washington, who fought valiantly for the Negro's rise, called his autobiography "Up from Slavery." The important word both in that title and in the Negro's progress is the "Up," not the "Slavery."

In Russia today people do not try to hide the fact that their forebears were serfs. Instead, they point to serfdom as one of the abuses of a vanished past. If "Uncle Tom's Cabin" humiliates white men by upbraiding them with what they did, it should please the Negroes by reminding them of how far they have come. It should encourage them, too, by indicating that the whites also have come a long way. The men have so recently been dying.

> JOHN MASON BROWN.

The final word on the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" episode seems to me to have been said in the telegram sent by the American Civil Liberties Union to the play and the book should be looked upon as milestones in the progress of a proud race.

This thing of banning books just because they say what we do not want them to is a dangerous business. Book Burning is more to the Nazi taste than sorship by such prohibitions creates precedents subject to the grossest abuses. To give in to one pressure group today invites surrender to a dozen tomorrow. The only safe course is to tolerate all themes with control solely in the courts for violations of law."

Book Roger Baldwin and Elmer Rice, "Cen-

LEBANON, IND.
REPORTER
Cir. D. 3,830
OCT 4 - 1945

Uncle Tom Rides Again

The news that Bridgeport, Conn., had banned a musical production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" fell upon incredulous ears in all parts of the country. Mayor Jasper McLevy, Socialist, had issued his order of suppression upon demand of the CIO, Negro leaders, the Communist Party and the Pastors' Association on the ground that the play portrayed the weaknesses of a racial minority and held it up to ridicule.

While it is true that in the course of many years the varying dramatizations of Mrs. Stowe's classic have produced versions bearing little resemblance to the original story, the basic theme has remained consistently sympathetic to the Negro.

While the flight of Eliza across the ice with bloodhounds baying at her heels and the ascent of Little Eva to heaven may inspire emotions of amusement, rather than terror or reverential awe, there is nothing in these spectacles to influence adversely the regard of the public for a racial minority. Meanwhile the antics of the lawyer named Marx and of the irrespressible Topsy can still be regarded, in spite of the changes of the years, as good fun.

Accordingly, the decision of Bridgeport's Socialist mayor to lift the ban on "Uncle Tom's Cabin," with the explanation that it was all a misunderstanding, will be welcomed. It would be unfortunate if the present generation and those to come were to be denied entertainment which in the past has provided amusement. Furthermore, such a ban, if permitted to stand, would have disturbing potentialities. What if the Danes should protest against "Hamlet" and the flint-hearted landlords of the land rise up in their wrath against "East Lynne," which gives them a rough going over.

And there is even the danger that Rostrand's classic, "Cyrano de Bergerac," would be resented by another minority group—people with long noses.

CLINTONVILLE, WIS. DRYMN. GZ
OCTOBER 4, 1945

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" See 67c
Runs into Trouble

Few maintain that "Uncle Tom's Cabin", by Harriet Beecher Stowe, is any great shakes as literature. And even fewer hold that it contributed much to objective history. But of all books that have been written about the American scene it can be said that in its effect it was probably the most important. It furnished the moral background that either made Northerners welcome the Civil War or to accept it.

Then for 50 years after the Civil War the play "Uncle Tom's Cabin", based on the book, was the play that everyone in the North went to—not just once but many times. We have no record of the number of road companies that played it but they must have run up into the hundreds if not into the thousands. Waupaca county, for instance, had its own "Uncle Tom's Cabin" company, a company founded and operated by Charlie Ogden over in Waupaca. Ogden's company made the kerosene circuit in the winter and showed in tents in summer. Charlie played twice every year in Waupaca—to overflow audiences both times.

Now "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is in trouble. That is, a touring troupe, presenting a musical version, over in Bridgeport, Conn., had its booking cancelled following protests "from Negro groups, the Communist party, the CIO, the Bridgeport pastors' association and other organizations who said the play recalled conditions best forgotten." Then as in physics, where every action has a reaction, and in an opposite direction, others protested against the cancellation. The net of the various protests is that Uncle Tom and Simon Legree and Little Eva and Mr. Sinclair (not Harry of gasoline fame) and Marks, the lawyer, and Topsy and all the rest will be in Bridgeport for a three nights' run.

We're glad that the show will go on—even though we can't say we're too enthusiastic about the musical embellishments any more than we were back ten years or so after the turn of the century when, to whip up a somewhat flagging interest, such stimulants as two Topsys and barber shop quartets were added. For it has always seemed to us a good idea for new generations to see what made previous generations act as they did. If, to the current generation it looked as if the moral background of the Civil War, as presented by Mrs. Stowe, was a little flimsy, it might get some of us to wondering about the background of more recent crusades and to checking into the concoctions of emotion tossed at us that have made us tick as we have ticked.

The problem of the world seems to be to be able to examine today's events and proposals with the disinterested objectivity that sometimes we are able to use in examining the past. We aren't hopeful that this can ever be done, but it would be a nice idea if we could do it.

* *

But before there can be a chance that that is possible we will have to have today's facts today and not twenty years or forty years from now. For it is an unquestioned fact that facts are withheld from us. Consider just one example. Back in the early Nineteen Twenties Robert Todd Lincoln, son of President Abraham Lincoln, let it get out that he intended to burn certain of President Lincoln's papers. When a report of Mr. Lincoln's intentions reached Nicholas Murray Butler at Columbia university, Mr. Butler at once rushed west to dissuade Mr. Lincoln. He pointed out that Abraham Lincoln had long since ceased to be regarded as a private individual, that he had come to belong to the nation and that even his own son had not the right to destroy papers that would throw light on Lincoln's problems and deeds. The result of the meeting was that Robert Todd Lincoln agreed not to destroy the papers on the understanding that they would be kept in the Library of Congress and revealed to the public only when twenty years had elapsed after his death. Robert Todd Lincoln died in December, 1926. America will know what was in those papers in December, 1946. Speculation as to the subject of the papers is not pertinent to the point we are making but it may be of interest to the readers of this editorial to know that they are thought to contain evidence implicating a member of Lincoln's cabinet in a plot on Lincoln's life. The point that IS pertinent is that crucial information as to Civil War events will have been withheld from us for more than 81 years after the ending of that war.

* *

We have disgressed from "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but not from the theme that the attempted suppression of that venerable play suggested—that we should strive to examine today's events with the objectivity we can often apply to yesterday's. For it is axiomatic that we cannot intelligently examine events without all the facts. Let us have the facts, all the facts. Facts can make us free.

88b-1945

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Illinois NAACP Differs With Walter White on 'Uncle Tom' Play

Daily Worker
New York, N.Y.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — In sharp disagreement with Walter White's support of the latest version of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' the Illinois State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People meeting here today moved to support the recent action of the Springfield branch against presentation of the play.

With 45 delegates present from such cities throughout the state as Bloomington, East St. Louis, Evanston, Decatur, Springfield and Lincoln, the conference, representing 25 to 30 branches in Illinois firmly disavowed the belated statement of N. A. A. C. P. national secretary, Walter White, which frowned upon efforts to ban the anti-Negro stage production. Discussion from the floor was heated and sharply critical.

White's statement was issued after attorneys representing the producer and local sponsors of the play had secured an injunction in federal court here restraining Mayor John W. Kapp of Springfield from carrying out the ban he ordered early last week.

The motion for the action taken which placed the conference on record in support of recent protest actions of the Springfield branch was taken branch by branch. All branches voted in support of the motion.

10-27-45

The Illinois State Conference of the N. A. A. C. P. was presided over by Edwin B. Jourdain, State President who is also an alderman in Evanston, Illinois.